AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE CHUNG-LUN,

with Nāgārjuna's Middle Stanzas, a basic text of Chinese Buddhism

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Seng'jui's Preface to the Chung-lun

(The following translation is essentially that of Robinson in Early Mādhyamika in India and China, pp.206-207, with some minor alterations). The text is found in T. Vol.XXX,p.1 (prefacing the Treatise) and in the Ch'u-san-tsang-chi-chi (T.2145,pp76-77).

In the Middle Treatise there are five hundred verses, composed by the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna. It is named 'Middle' to proclaim its actual (object). It is entitled 'Treatise' to complete the wording. The actual is not understood except through names; therefore they designate it 'Middle' in order to declare it. The wording is not completed except through explanations; therefore they adopt 'Treatise' to make it clear. When the actual is declared and the wording is clear, then in the bodhisattva's course the intuition of the bodhimaṇḍa shines brilliantly, and "the suspension-cords are untied."

Craving and delusion arise from misconceptions, and by them the three domains are submerged. One-sided understanding springs from knowledge (characterized) by aversion, and through it their resolve errs from the goal. Thus we know that great bodhi resides in vast intuition, and small knowledge is bound by the constricted mind. If the intuition is not vast, then it does not suffice to raze the existent and the inexistent, to unify the religious and the profane. If knowledge is not consummate, then with it one cannot traverse the Middle Path and obliterate the two limits. That the religious and the profane are not unified and that the two limits are not obliterated is what grieves the bodhisattva. Therefore the great man Nāgārjuna equalized them with the

Middle Path, enabling students who have erred from the goal (meaning) to look at the metaphysical pointer and totally change. He encompassed them with (the principle of) identity with transformations, and caused the clients of metaphysical understanding to lose their plans and deliberations in the morning's clear rays.

How vast it is! It may truly be said to put in order and make level the road to (along) the "hollow stairs" and to open out the metaphysical gate within the cosmos, to fan the wind of prajñā among the dry twigs, and pour the sweet dew on the withered and downcast. When the hundred-beamed (cedar-beamed) mansion arises, it makes the tumble-down thatched cottage seem mean. When you behold how grand this treatise is, then you know how inferior one-sided understanding is. How fortunate it is that this land of China has suddenly had Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa moved to it to be its chief mountain, and that biased minds in outlying areas receive the flowing light of its surplus of kindness. From now on, for the first time the worthies who discuss the Tao can converse about the reality, (the actual).

It is said that in all the states of India there are none who venture to engage in studies who do not pore over this treatise and take it for their canon. Very many of them have moistened their quills and written commentaries. The one that we are now issuing is the commentary by the Indian brahman named Pin-lo-chia (or Pin-chia-lo), in the Ch'in language, 'Blue-Eyes'. Though he believes and understands the profound Dharma, his language was not elegant and opposite. The Dharma-master

(Kumārajīva) has edited and emended all the errors, deficiencies and redundancies in it, interpreting it according to the Stanzas, so that the principles are definitive, though in some places the language is not entirely excellent.

The Hundred Treatise disciplines outsiders and shuts out falsehoods. This text frees insiders (Buddhists) and dissolves their obstructions. The Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise is profound and vast. The Twelve Topics is concise and to the point. When you examine these four, it is indeed as if the sun and moon entered your bosom. There is nothing that is not mirrored forth clearly.

I have handled (this book) and have pored over it and have not been able to let it out of my hand. So, forgetting my lowness and ineptness, I have expressed my insights and feelings in a preface, and have put a table of contents at the beginning. But how can I hope to explain it! It is merely to express delight at my own sentiment of agreement.

THE MIDDLE TREATISE

Translation

(1b11) The Middle Treatise[1]

Verses[2] by the Bodhisattva Dragon-Tree (Nāgārjuna).[3]

Commentary by the Brahman Blue-eyes.[4]

Translated by Kumarajiva, Master of the Tripiṭaka under Yao of Ch'in.[5]

Chapter 1. Contemplation of Causality[6] 16 verses

1v1 No arising and no ceasing
No permanence and no severance
No identity and no difference
No arriving and no departing[7]

1v2 To the one who can expound this matter of causality
And completely extinguish all sophistries[8]
I bow my head in reverence:
The Buddha, greatest of all teachers.

1/0 Question: Why was this treatise composed?

Reply: There are some who say that all things arise from the god 'Great Self-Being'.[9] Some say that they arise from Visnu, some say that they arise from combination,[10] some say that they arise from time,[11] some say that they arise from the world-nature,[12] some say that they arise from transformations,[13] some say that they arise spontaneously[14] and some say that they arise from atoms.[15] Because they hold to these various errors they fall into false views such as that things have no cause, or some wrong cause, that they are permanent or that they are cut off, and so on. In various ways they expound 'I' and 'mine', but they do not know the true Dharma. The Buddha,

desiring to terminate all such false views and to make known the Buddha-dharma, first taught the twelve causal links[16] in the Sravaka-Dharma;[17] but also, for the benefit of those who have already applied themselves, who have the great mind and who are capable of receiving the profound Dharma, he expounded in the Mahayana-Dharma[18] the characteristics of causality, namely that all dharmas neither arise nor cease, are not the same, do not differ and so on; they are utterly empty and devoid of anything which exists. As is stated in the Prajnaparamita Sutra,[19] 'The Buddha told Subhuti: When a Bodhisattva is established in the seat of enlightenment,[20] he views the twelve causal links as like the inexhaustibility of empty space'.

(1b29) After the Buddha's decease, in the second five hundred years of the patterned Dharma,[21] men's faculties became dulled, they became deeply attached to all dharmas, and sought for settled, fixed characteristics[22] in the twelve causal links, the five[23] skandhas, the twelve avenues,[24] the eighteen realms,[25] and so on. They did not know the Buddha's intention and were merely attached to words and letters. Hearing utter emptiness taught in the Mahayana-Dharma they did not know the reason for things being empty, and so conceived doubts and views, such as 'If all things are utterly empty how can you differentiate sin and merit, karmic recompense and so on? If this were so, there would be no worldly truth and no truth of the supreme meaning'.[26] They seized hold of the characteristic of 'emptiness'[27] and produced voracious attachments, generating all sorts of errors about utter emptiness. It was for such reasons as these that the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna composed this Middle Treatise.

1v1 No arising and no ceasing
No permanence and no severance
No identity and no difference
No arriving and no departing

1v2 To the one who can expound this matter of causality
And completely destroy all sophistries
I bow my head in reverence:
The Buddha, greatest of all teachers.[28]

1/2 With these two verses he reveres the Buddha, and expounds in brief the supreme meaning.

Question: Dharmas are innumerable. Why do the negations refer only to these eight things?

Answer: Although dharmas are innumerable, by the brief exposition of eight things he effects a comprehensive negation of all dharmas.

(1c14) As to 'no arising', the commentators expound the characteristic of 'arising' in various ways. Some say that cause and effect are identical, some say that cause and effect are different, some say that the effect pre-exists in the cause, some say that the effect does not pre-exist in the cause, some say that things arise from themselves, and some say they arise from other things, while some say that they arise from both together. Some say that arising exists, while others say that arising is non-existent. Such ways of expounding the characteristic of arising are entirely wrong, and these matters will be enlarged upon later. Since no fixed characterstic of arising is tenable,[29] there is no arising. As for 'no ceasing'; if there is no arising, how can there be ceasing? Since there is no arising

and no ceasing, the remaining six are also negated.

(1c21) Question: If 'no arising and no ceasing' imply a comprehensive negation of all dharmas, why does he repeat the exposition with regard to the other six things?

Reply: It is in order to bring out the meaning of 'no arising and no ceasing'. There are some people who do not accept no arising and no ceasing, but do believe in no permanence and no severance. A deep enquiry into no permanence and no severance shows them to be the same as no arising and no ceasing, and why? If a dharma really exists then clearly it cannot be non-existent. If it formerly existed and now does not exist, this constitutes severance. If its nature existed before, then this would be permanence. This is why he teaches 'no permanence and no severance', to lead into the meaning of 'no arising and no ceasing'.

(2a3) There are some people who, although they hear these four ways of negating dharmas, nevertheless establish dharmas through the other four ways, but these are also mistaken. If all dharmas were one there could be no causal relations, while if they were different there could be no continuity of characteristic These things will be refuted in various ways later on. Therefore we declare again 'no identity and no difference'. There are some people who, although recognising these six ways of negating dharmas nevertheless establish dharmas in terms of arriving and departing. As for 'arriving', they say that dharmas come from the god 'Self-Being' (Isvara), from the world-nature or from the atoms, and so forth. As for 'departing', they say that dharmas return to their place of

origin.

(2a8) Moreover, the myriad things do not arise, and why? It is because of direct worldly perception.[30] As we see with our worldly eyes, corn does not arise at the beginning of a kalpa,[31] and why? Without the corn at the beginning of the kalpa there could be no corn now. If there were corn existing now apart from that at the beginning of the kalpa, there would have been an arising, but in fact this is not so, and therefore there is no arising.

Question: If there is no arising, then surely there must be ceasing?

Reply: There is no ceasing, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, the corn which was there at the beginning of the kalpa did not cease. If it had ceased there would be no corn now, but in fact there is corn, and therefore there is no ceasing.

Question: If there is no ceasing then surely there must be permanence?

Reply: There is no permanence, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes things are not permanent; for example, when the corn sprouts the seed decays, and therefore there is no permanence.

Question: If there is no permanence then surely there must be severance.

Reply: There is no severance, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes things are not cut off. For instance, the sprout grows out of the corn, and therefore there is no severance. If there were severance there would be no continuity of characteristics.[32]

(2a20) Question: If this is so, then all things are one.

Reply: They are not one, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things are not one; for example, the corn does not constitute the sprout and the sprout does not constitute the corn. If the corn constituted the sprout and the sprout constituted the corn, they would be one, but in fact this is not so and therefore they are not one.

Question: If they are not one, then surely they must be different?

Reply: They are not different, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things are not different. If things are different from each other why do we classify things as shoots of corn, stalks of corn and leaves of corn rather than as shoots of a trees, stalks of a trees or leaves of trees?[33] Therefore they are not different.

(2a26) Question: If there is no difference then surely there must be arriving?

Reply: There is no arriving, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things do not arrive; for example, the sprout inside the grain of corn does not arrive from anywhere. If there were arriving the sprout would have to come from some other place, like a bird coming to roost in a tree; but in fact this is not so, and therefore there is no arriving.

Question: If there is no arriving then surely there must be departing?

Reply: There is no departing, and the reason for this lies in direct worldly perception. As we see with our worldly eyes, things do not depart. If there were departing we should see the sprout departing from the corn, like a snake coming out of its hole; but in fact this does not happen. Therefore there is no departing.

(2b4) Question: Although you have commented on the significance of 'no arising and no ceasing', we should like to hear the exposition of the one who composed the treatise.

Reply:

1v3 Dharmas are not self-produced,[34]
Nor do they arise from others,
Nor from both, nor without a cause,
Therefore we know there is no arising.

1/3 As to 'not self-produced'; things do not exist by arising from their own substance but invariably depend upon a host of causes. Moreover, if they did arise from their own substance then each single dharma would have two substances. One would be the produced and the other would be the producer. If things were produced from their own substance without extraneous causes, then they would have neither causes nor conditions. Furthermore, arising would in turn have an arising, and there would be an endless regression of arising.

(2b10) Where there is no self there is also no other, and why? The existence of "other" depends on the existence of "self". If there is no arising from self then there is also no arising from other. Arising "from both" involves two errors, namely arising from self and arising from other. If there were no

causes and yet the myriad things existed, this would be permanence,[35] and this is not correct. Where there is no cause there is no effect; if there were no causes and yet there were effects, then giving alms, keeping the precepts and so forth could drag you down into the hells, while the ten evils and five rebellious acts[36] could lead to rebirth in the heavens, because there would be no causal link.

1v4 Further:

As no self-nature of dharmas[37]
Is found in the midst of causes
So, because there is no self-nature
There is also no other-nature.

1/4 No self-nature of dharmas is found in the midst of causes. However, because of the combination of causes, we get nomenclature.[38] Self-nature means the same as self-substance. In the midst of causes there is no self-nature, and since self-nature does not exist there is no self-production. Since self-nature does not exist, other-nature does not exist either, and why? Because the existence of other-nature depends on the existence of self-nature. An "other-nature", for that other, is in fact a self-nature. If self-nature is refuted, then other-nature too is refuted, and therefore there cannot be production from other-nature. If self-nature and other-nature are refuted, then the idea of both together is refuted. To say "without a cause" is a great error. Arguments invoking cause can be refuted; how much more if you say "without a cause"! Arising cannot be established in any of these four ways, and therefore there is no arising.

Question: An Abhidharmist[39] would say that dharmas arise from four kinds of causes, so why do you say that there is no arising? What are these four causes?

1v5 Causal condition, sequential cause
Objective cause, predominant cause.
Four causes produce all dharmas
There is no fifth beyond these.[40]

1/5 All causes which exist may be summed up as four causes, and through these four causes all things are produced. 'Causal condition' refers to all active dharmas. 'Sequential cause' refers to the dharmas of all past and present thoughts and mental configurations except the very last thoughts and mental configurations of past and present arhats.[41] 'Objective cause' and 'predominant cause' apply to all dharmas.

Reply:

1v6 Do effects arise from causes?
Or do they arise from non-causes?
Do these causes have effects?
Or do these causes have no effects?

1/6 If, as you say, there are effects, do these effects arise from causes, or do they arise from non-causes? If, as you say, there are causes, do these causes have effects or do they have no effects? Both of these are wrong, and why?

1v7 When an effect arises from a certain dharma,
This dharma is called a cause.
If such an effect has not yet arisen,

How can we not call it a non-cause?

1/7 All causes are indeterminate,[42] and why? Because if their effects have not yet arisen, then they are not yet called causes. If is only because we see with our eyes effects arising out of causes that we declare them to be causes. They become causes by virtue of the effects. Since the effects follow after and the causes go before, when there is not yet any effect how can we call something a cause? It is like a jug, produced through the combination of water and earth. It is because we see the jug that we know water and earth to be the causes of the jug, but if the jug were not yet produced, how could we not declare the water and earth to be non-causes? Therefore effects do not arise from causes, and if there is no arising with causes, how much more so without causes?

Further:

1v8 An effect already given in a cause
Can neither exist nor not exist
If previously non-existent, what would the cause produce?
If already existent, why would the cause be needed?

1/8 There is no prior existence of effects in causes, nor prior non-existence. If an effect already existed, nothing could be called its cause, since the effect was already existent. Similarly, if the effect was all the time inexistent we could not describe something as its cause, since it would not have produced any further entity.

Question: You have refuted causality comprehensively, but now we wish to hear these causes negated one by one.

Reply:

1v9 If neither an existent effect is produced
Nor an inexistent one is produced,
Nor an existent-and-inexistent one is produced
How can you say that there are causes?[43]

1/9 If causes could produce effects, then these would be of three kinds; either existent, or inexistent, or both existent-and-inexistent. As was argued in the previous verse, if the effect were already existent within its cause, then we could not say that it was produced, because it existed already, and if the effect were previously non-existent, then we could not say that it had been produced, since it did not exist, and because it would be similarly uncaused. As to 'existent-and-inexistent' effects being likewise not produced; 'existent-and-inexistent' means half existent and half inexistent, yet to speak of both at once is wrong. Moreover, existence is the opposite of inexistence, and inexistence is the opposite of existence; how could there be one dharma with two characteristics? Since these three ways of seeking for the characteristic of 'a producer of an effect' lead nowhere, how can you assert that there are "causal conditions"?

As to the 'sequential condition';

1v10 Where an effect has not yet arisen
There cannot have been cessation.
Yet how can a ceased dharma be a cause?
Therefore there is no 'sequential cause'.[44]

1/10 All the dharmas of thoughts and mental configurations are produced consecutively in the three periods of time.[45] The cessation of the dharma of a present thought or mental configuration constitutes the sequential cause for a future thought. Yet for what does it constitute a sequential cause if the future dharma has not yet been produced? And if that future dharma is already existent, it is already produced, so what use does it have for a sequential cause?

There is no time when the dharmas of present thoughts and mental configurations are at rest. If they are never at rest, how can they act as sequential causes? If they were at rest, then they would be inactive dharmas.[46] Why is this? Because active dharmas always have the characteristics of cessation.[47] If they have ceased, they cannot act as sequential causes. If you say that a ceased dharma still exists, then this implies permanence, but if there is permanence then there can be no sin and merit,[48] and so forth. If you hold that the moment of cessation can act as a sequential cause, then the moment of cessation must be half ceased and half not-yet-ceased. Apart from these there is no third dharma to be called the moment of cessation. Moreover the Buddha has taught that "all active dharmas cease in successive instants. There is not one single instant when they abide", so how can you say that a present dharma is both on the point of cessation and not on the point of cessation? If you assert that one instant does not include this on the point of cessation and not on the point of cessation, you deny your own dharma.[49] Your Ahidharmist speaks of a dharma of cessation, a dharma of non-cessation, a dharma of on the point of cessation and a dharma of not on the

point of cessation. The dharma of on the point of cessation includes present dharmas which are about to cease; the dharma of not on the point of cessation includes, with the exception of present dharmas which are about to cease, the remaining present dharmas plus past, future and inactive dharmas; these are termed not on the point of cessation dharmas. For these reasons there are no 'sequential causes'.

As to the 'objective cause';

1v11 According to the true and subtle Dharma
Taught by all the Buddhas,
In this Dharma without causes
How can there be objective causes?[50]

1/11 The Buddha teaches in the Mahāyāna that the characteristics of dharmas - whether they have form or do not have form, whether they have shape or do not have shape, whether they have outflows or do not have outflows, whether they are active or inactive,[51] and so forth - all these characteristics enter into the Dharma-nature; 0 everything is entirely empty and so there are no characteristics and no conditions. It is just as if everything flowed into an ocean and merged into one essence.[52] You may believe in the true Dharma, but what is taught as an expedient does not constitute true reality.[53] Therefore there are no objective causes.[54]

As to the 'predominant cause';

1v12 Since dharmas do not have self nature
The characteristic of existence does not occur
To assert 'because this things exists
That thing exists' is not correct.[55]

1/12 In relation to the sutras' teaching of the twelve causal links,

to say that 'because this thing exists, therefore that thing exists', is wrong, and why? Because dharmas are produced from causes and do not have a fixed nature of their own. Since they have no fixed nature of their own, they do not have the characteristic of 'existence'. Where the characteristic of existence does not exist, how can you say 'this thing exists, therefore that thing exists'? Therefore, there is no predominant cause. It was only in accordance with the distinction made by ordinary people between existence and nonexistence that the Buddha spoke of them.[56]

Further:

1v13 In causes and conditions, whether summarized or at length,[57]
You search in vain for an effect.
If an effect does not exist within conditions
How can you say that it issues from them?

1/13 'Summarized' means; in the causes taken in combination there is no effect. 'At length' means; in the causes taken one by one there is likewise no effect. If there is no effect within the causes, whether taken in summary or at length, how can you say that effects issue from causes?

Further:

1v14 If you maintain that causes have no effects
And yet effects arise from within causes,
Then why should these effects not
Issue from non-causes?

1/14 If you seek for effects within causes you cannot find them,

so why should they not issue from non-causes? As an analogy, there is no jug in the clay, so why should one not issue from milk? Moreover:

1v15 If effects arise from causes
And these causes have no self-nature,
Then effects arise from things which have no self-nature,
So how can they arise from causes?

1v16 Effects do not arise from causes
And they do not arise from non-causes.
Since the effects do not exist,
Causes and non-causes likewise do not exist.

1/16 Effects arise from causes, but these 'causes' do not have self-nature. If they do not have self-nature then they are not dharmas. If they are not dharmas, how can they arise? Therefore, effects do not arise from causes. As for not arising from non-causes; in denying causes we stated that there were non-causes, but in reality there are no such dharmas as non-causes, and therefore there is no arising from non-causes. If there is no arising from either of these two then there are no effects. Since there are no effects, there are neither causes nor non-causes.

Chapter 2. Contemplation of Going and Coming[58] 25 verses

2/0 Question: We see with our worldly eyes the three periods of time[59] operating. There is the gone, the not-yet-gone and the moment-of-going. Because these operate we know that all dharmas exist.

Reply:

2v1 In the already-gone there is no going
And in the not-yet-gone there is no going
Apart from the already-gone and the not-yet-gone
The moment of going also has no going.

2/1 In the already-gone there is no going, since it is already gone. If there existed an 'action of going'[60] separate from 'going' this would not be right. The not-yet-gone similarly has no going, since there is not yet any dharma of going. 'The moment of going' means half gone and half not-yet-gone, because it is not separate from the already-gone and the not-yet-gone.

Question:

2v2 In the place of movement there is going
In this is the moment of going
It is neither already-gone nor not-yet-gone
Therefore the moment of going goes.

2/2 Insofar as there is a situation in which there is an action done, going ought to exist in this. We see with our eyes that in the moment-of-going there is a situation of (karmic) activity. In the already-gone, the activity has already ceased, and in the not-yet-gone activity does not yet exist.

Therefore we know that there is going in the moment-of-going.

Reply:

2v3 Why do you say that in the moment-of-going
There must exist a dharma of going?
When without the dharma of going
There cannot be a moment-of-going?

2/3 'In the moment-of-going there is a dharma of going'; This is not so, and why? No moment-of-going can be found apart from a dharma of going. If there could be a moment-of-going which existed without a dharma of going, there would be going within such a moment-of-going, just like fruit in a dish.

Moreover:

2v4 If someone asserts that there is going in a moment-of-going,
This person is in error.
The moment-of-going exists without any separate 'going'
Since the moment of going 'goes' in itself.

2/4 If someone says that in the already-gone and the not-yet-gone there is no going, but that a going really exists in the moment-of-going, this person is in error. If the moment-of-going existed independently of the dharma of going, then they would not be interdependent. Why is this? If you assert that there is going in the moment-of-going, this implies two operations, but this is not so in reality. Therefore you cannot say that there is a moment-of-going separate from going. Moreover:

2v5 If the moment-of-going has going
Then there are two kinds of going.
One is called the moment-of-going
The other is the going-of-the-moment-of-going.

2/5 If you assert that the moment-of-going has going, then this is an error which implies there are two goings. One is the

moment-of-going which depends on going; the other is the going within the moment-of-going.

Question: What is wrong in there being two goings?

Reply:

2v6 If there are two dharmas of going
Then there are two goers
Because, unless there were a goer
You could not have a dharma of going.

2/6 If there are two dharmas of going, then there must be two goers, and why? Because the goer exists by virtue of the dharma of going. One man, two goings and two goers? This is not right. Therefore the moment-of-going does not have going as well.

Question: Although it may be true that a goer does not have (a separate) going, yet there definately are goers in the three times.

Reply:

2v7 If, apart from a goer
No dharma of going can be found,
Where there is no dharma of going
How can there be any goer?

2/7 If you isolate the goer, no (separate) dharma of going can be found. Now how can you assert, when there are no dharmas of going, that goers definitely exist in the three periods of time?

Further:

2v8 A goer does not go
And a non-goer does not go.
Apart from goer and non-goer,

There is no third goer.

2/8 There is no goer. Why is this? If there were goers, then there would be two categories, either goers or non-goers. Apart from these two, there can be no third (category of) goer.

Question: What is wrong in saying that a goer goes?

Reply:

2v9 If you talk about a goer going,
What does this mean
When, without a dharma of going,
There can be no goer?

2/9 If you say that a goer definitely exists, and he employs a dharma of going, this is not correct, and why? Because no goer can be found separately from a dharma of going. If a dharma of going definitely existed, separate from a goer, then the goer could employ the dharma of going, but this is not what happens.

Further:

2v10 If a goer has going,
Then there are two sorts of going.
One is the going of the goer,
The other is the going of the dharma of going.

2/10 If you say that a goer employs a dharma of going, then this involves two errors, for there is one goer but two goings. One; by means of the dharma of going, the goer is established (as a goer), the other; by means of the goer the dharma of going is established. The goer, already established, employs the dharma of going. This is not correct. Therefore, when you previously asserted that in the three periods of time there definitely exist goers, and they who employ dharmas of going, this is not right. Again;

2v11 If someone says that a goer goes,
This person is in error.
(He makes) the goer separate from going,
And asserts that the goer has going.

2/11 If someone teaches that a goer can employ a dharma of going, this person makes the error (of saying that) the goer exists separately from the dharma of going. Why is this? To teach that a goer can employ a dharma of going, implies that the goer existed first and the dharma of going later on, but this is not correct. Therefore, there are no goers in the three periods of time. Further, if (both) going and goer definitely existed, they would have to have a beginning, but if you search for such a beginning in the three periods of time you cannot find it. Why is this?

2v12 In the already-gone there is no beginning
In the not-yet-gone there is no beginning
And in the moment-of-going there is no beginning.
So where could this beginning be?

2/12 Why are there no beginnings in the three times?

2v13 Until it has begun, there is no moment-of-going,
And likewise, there is no already-gone.
These two ought to have beginnings
how can there be a beginning of the not-yet-gone?

2v14 No (already) gone and no not-yet-gone
And moreover, no moment of going;
If all these have no beginnings.
Why then do we distinguish them?

2/14 If a person has not yet started out, then there is no moment-of-going, and likewise there is no already-gone. If there were beginnings then they would have to be located in two places, namely, the moment-of-going or the already-gone. These two are both wrong since, at the time when a person has not yet gone, there has not yet been any beginning. So how can there be a beginning in the not-yet-gone? If there is no beginning, there is no going. If there is no going, there is no goer; so how can there be an already-gone, a not-yet-gone and a moment-of-going?

Question: Even if there is no going and no goer, surely there is (the antithesis) resting, and those who are at rest?

Reply:

2v15 A goer is not at rest[61]
A non-goer is not at rest
Apart from the goer and non-goer
What third one is there to be at rest?

2/15 If there is resting, and those who rest, these ought to be either goers who are resting, or non-goers who are resting, or, apart from these two, some third who is resting, but these are not correct. A goer is not at rest, since a goer has not yet stopped. Going means the opposite of resting. A non-goer likewise is not at rest, and why? It is because of the cessation of the dharma of going that resting exists, so where there is no going, there is no resting. Apart from the goer and non-goer there is no further third one who is at rest. If there were a third type who was at rest, he would have to be found amongst either the goers or the non-goers. Therefore, you cannot say that a goer is at rest.

Further:

2v16 If a goer is at rest,
What meaning does this have
When, as you say, without going
You cannot have a goer?

2/16 You say that a goer is at rest but this is not correct, and why? No goer can be had apart from a dharma of going. If the goer resides in the characteristic of going, then why do you suppose that he is at rest, since going and resting are opposed to each other?

Further:

2v17 In the gone, and not-yet-gone there is no resting
And in the moment-of-going there is no resting
All the dharmas of moving and ceasing which exist,
Are included in the idea of going.

2/17 If you say that one who goes is at rest, then this person should be at rest either in the moment-of-going, or in the already-gone, or in the not-yet-gone. In none of these situations is he at rest. Therefore, when you say 'a goer is at rest' this is not correct. It amounts to a denial both of the dharma of going and the dharma of being at rest. It is the same with moving and stopping. 'Moving' is like the grain of corn developing by a continuous process into sprout, stalk and leaf, and so on. 'Stopping' is when, because the grain of corn dies, the sprout, the stalk and the leaf die. There is continuity of characteristics so we call it movement; there is cessation so we call it stopping. It is like the process of ignorance, causing predispositions and so on up to old age and death, being called 'movement', and when the predispositions and so forth cease because of the cessation of ignorance this

being called 'stopping'.[62]

Question: Although you have refuted going and goers and resting and those at rest in various ways, nevertheless we can see with our eyes that there is going, and being at rest.

Reply: What you see with the physical eyes cannot be trusted.[63] If there really are going and goers, are these established in terms of one dharma, or in terms of two dharmas? Two at once would be wrong. Why is this?

2v18 'The dharma of going is the same as the goer';
This assertion is wrong.
'The dharma of going is different from the goer';
This assertion, too, is wrong.

2/18 If the dharma of going and the goer are said to be one, then this is not correct. If different, this too is incorrect.

Question: What error is there in their being either identical or different?

Reply:

2v19 If you hold that the dharma of going
Is the same thing as the goer,
Then a doer, and his deed
Would also be one thing.

2v20 If you hold that the dharma of going
Is different from the goer,
Then there is going separate from a goer
And a goer separate from his going.

2/20 These two are both wrong, and why? If the dharma of going were the same as the goer, then this would confuse and negate the principle of causality. The goer exists by virtue of his

going. Going exists on account of the goer. Moreover 'going' means a dharma, whereas 'goer' means a person. A person abides whilst a dharma is fleeting.[64] If these were identical, then they would have to be either both permanent or both impermanent. These are the kinds of errors we find in (the concept of) oneness. If they were different, they would contrast with each other. The goer would have to exist even when the dharma of going was not yet in existence, and the dharma of going would have to exist while the goer was not yet in existence. Since they would not be mutually dependent one dharma could cease and the other dharma be present. These are the kinds of errors that we find in the (concept of) difference.

Further:

2v21 These two, going and goer
Whether established as identical or different dharmas,
Cannot be established in either of these two ways
So how can you say that they are established?

2/21 If you have a goer and a dharma of going, you must establish them either in terms of one dharma, or in terms of different dharmas. Both of these are untenable, and we have already stated that there is no third dharma. If you maintain that they are established (as entities) then you will have to assert that in terms of causality there is no going, and there are no goers. Now we will discuss this:

2v22 We know a goer by virtue of his going,
But he cannot employ this going,
Because no dharma of going previously existed.
Therefore, it is not a case of a goer going.

2/22 Whatever may be the dharma of going by which we recognise a goer, that goer cannot employ such a dharma of going. Why is this? At the time when the dharma of going is as yet inexistent, there is no goer; neither is there a moment-of-going, an already-gone or a not-yet-gone, as if there were first a person, and a city or town which he is to reach, and there is the place from which he is to start. A dharma of going and a goer is not correct. The goer is established by virtue of the dharma of going, and the dharma of going by virtue of the goer. Moreover:

2v23 It is because of (his) going that we recognise a goer
He cannot employ a separate going
Since, within one goer
There cannot be two goings.

2/23 By whatever dharma of going we recognise a goer, the goer cannot employ any separate dharma of going, and why? Because there cannot be two dharmas of going within one goer. Again:

2v24 A goer who has a definitely fixed existence
Cannot employ the three goings.
And a goer who does not have a definitely fixed existence
Likewise cannot employ the three goings.

2v25 Whether the dharma of going is fixed or not fixed
The goer cannot employ the three (goings).
For this reason, neither going, nor the goer,
Nor the place of going exist.

2/25 'Definitely fixed'[65] means having real existence from the

beginning and not arising on account of a dharma of going. 'Dharma of going' means the movement of the body. 'These three'[66] means not-yet-gone, already-gone and moment-of-going. If the goer has a definite, fixed existence, then such a goer ought to exist separately from the dharma of going, though he should not be at rest. This is why it is said that a definitely fixed existent goer cannot employ the three goings. As for 'if the goer is not definitely fixed'; 'Not definitely fixed' means really nonexistent from the beginning. Since it is by virtue of the dharma of going, that we identify someone as a goer, where there is no dharma of going, he cannot employ three goings. It is by virtue of a dharma of going that a goer exists. If there is no dharma of going, then there is no goer, so how can you maintain that a goer not definitely fixed can employ the three goings? What applies to the goer also applies to the dharma of going. If there were a definitely fixed dharma of going existing before there was a goer, then the dharma of going would not be existing because of the goer, and for this reason, the goer could not employ the three dharmas of going. If the dharma of going were definitely non-existent, what would the goer employ?

(5c10) If we thoroughly investigate and contemplate in this way upon, the dharmas of going, the goer and the place of going, we are able to regard these goings as all mutually dependent; the goer existing by virtue of the dharma of going, and the dharma of going existing by virtue of the goer. Because of these two dharmas, there exists the situation in which going can take place. It cannot be said to be definitely existent, and it cannot be said to be definitely non-existent. In this way

we may have definite knowledge that these three goings are false and insubstantial. They are empty and have no existence, being merely unreal designations, like illusions or apparitions.[67]

Chapter 3. Contemplation of the six sense-faculties 8 verses

3/0 Question: In the sutras it says that there are six sense-faculties, namely;

3v1 The faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue,
Body and mind.
These six faculties, the eye and so forth,
Go with the six objects, of form and so on.[69]

3/1 In this case, the eye constitutes the inner faculty and form the outer object, and the eye can see forms, and so on up to mind[70] is the inner faculty, dharmas the outer object and the mind cognizes dharmas.

Reply: Not so, and why?

3v2 The eye is unable
By itself to see itself.
If it is unable to see itself
How can it possibly see anything else?

3/2 The eye cannot see its own self. Why not? Just as a lamp, shining by itself is able to illuminate something else, so the eye, if it had this characteristic of seeing, should see both itself and other things. But in fact this is not the case. So, in the verse he says: when the eye does not see itself, how can it see other things?

Question: Even, though the eye cannot see itself, yet it can see other things. Fire, for instance can burn other things without burning itself.

Reply:

3v3 The example of fire cannot establish anything
About eyes and seeing
In the contemplation of present, past and future going[71]
We have already dealt with this topic.

3/3 Although you offer the example of fire, this cannot illustrate anything about eyes and seeing. This topic has already been dealt with in the chapter on going and coming. Just as in what has already gone there is no going, and in what has not-yet-gone there is no going and in the moment of going there is no going, so in the already-burnt, not-yet-burnt and moment of burning there is no burning at all. Likewise in the already-seen, the not-yet-seen and the moment of seeing, no characteristic of 'seeing' can be found at all.
Again:

3v4 Seeing, before the moment of seeing,
is not called seeing.
But you say that 'seeing' can see.
This is not so

3/4 When the eye is not yet confronted with the visible form, then it cannot see it. At this juncture we do not call it 'seeing'. It is because of the confrontation with form that we call it 'seeing'. This is why it says in the verse: before there is seeing, there is no seeing. So how can we see by means of seeing? Moreover, within these two events there is no dharma of seeing, and why?

3v5 Seeing cannot see
And non-seeing cannot see

Since we have already refuted seeing
This amounts to a refutation of a seer also.

3/5 Seeing cannot see, for reasons explained in our refutation of errors. Non-seeing cannot see because it possesses no characteristic of seeing, and when there is no characteristic of seeing how can there be seeing? Where no dharma of seeing exists, no seer exists either, and why? If there were seers who existed apart from seeing, then those without eyes should also be able to see, using their other faculties. If we saw by means of seeing, then the characteristic of seeing would exist within the act of seeing. But the one who sees is not the characteristic of seeing. This is why it says in the verse: when we refute seeing, this implies a refutation of the seer.

Again:

3v6 Whether separate from seeing, or not separate from seeing,
No seer can be found.
Since there is no-one who sees,
How can there be seeing, or anything seen?

3/6 When there is seeing, then no seer can be established, and also when there is no seeing no seer can be established. Since there is no seer, how can there be seeing, or anything seen? And if there is no seer, who is there to employ a dharma of seeing to distinguish external forms? For these reasons it says in the verse: Since there is no-one who sees, how can there be seeing, or anything seen?

Again:

3v7 Since seeing and what can be seen do not exist,

The four dharmas of consciousness etc.,[72] do not exist.
Nor the four types of attachment,[73] nor causal links.[74]
How could these things exist?

3/7 Since the dharmas of seeing and what is seen do not exist, none of the four dharmas of consciousness, contact, reception and craving[75] exists, and since there is no craving etc., the four graspings[76] etc., and each one of the twelve causal links similarly does not exist.

Again:

3v8 Ear, nose, tongue, body and mind[77]
Sound[78] and hearer[79] and so forth
Must be understood in the same way
Together with what has been discussed above.

3/8 Just as the dharmas of seeing and what is seen are empty because they are wholly dependent upon conditions and not fixed, so the five remaining faculties of ears etc. and five objects such as sound etc. must be understood in the same way as seeing, what is seen, and so on. Because these may be interpreted according to the same principle they are not discussed separately.

Chapter 4 Contemplation of the Five Skandhas[80] 9 verses

4/0 Question: The sutras state that there are five skandhas. What do you say about this?

4v1 Form that is separate from the cause of form[81]
Is inconceivable
A cause of form separate from form
Is inconceivable

4/1 As for 'cause of form'. It is like threads being the cause of the cloth. If you take away the threads, there is no cloth, and if you cast away the cloth, there is no thread. The cloth is like form, the threads are like its cause[82]

Question: What is the error in saying that form exists separately from its cause?

Reply:

4v2 Form which existed separately from the cause of form
Would be form without a cause.
A dharma which exists without a cause?
This is not correct.[83]

4/2 It is like a cloth existing separately from its threads, which would be a cloth without a cause. Things which are uncaused and yet exist are not found anywhere in the world.[84]

Question: In the Buddha-dharma, in the doctrines of outsiders (non-Buddhists) and in worldly teachings there are dharmas which are uncaused. Buddhism has the three inactive (dharmas)[85] which, being inactive are permanent and therefore without causes. In the non-Buddhist teachings they have space, time,

direction, soul, atoms, nirvana and so forth. In the teachings of the ordinary world there are emptiness, time, direction and so on. These three dharmas, being nowhere non-existent are consequently called 'permanent'. Being permanent, they are uncaused, so how can you say that uncaused dharmas do not exist in the world?

(6c3) Reply:

These 'uncaused dharmas' only exist as figures of speech. If we ponder and analyse them we find they are non-existent. If dharmas have their being through causes and conditions, we ought not to say that they are uncaused. If they have no causes and conditions then it is as we have said.

Question: Causes are of two kinds:[86] One is the actual cause, the other is the 'figurative cause'. These 'uncaused dharmas' have no actual cause, they merely have a figurative cause, to make people know of them.

Reply: Although they have figurative causes, you are not correct. Just as 'Space' is refuted, in the (next chapter on the) six elements, so the remaining items will be refuted later. Moreover, since even visible things can be refuted, how much more so atoms and other invisible things? This is why we state that there are no uncaused dharmas in the world.

Question: If (we said that) the cause of form existed separately from form, what would be wrong with that?

Reply:

4v3 If its cause existed, separate from form,
Then this 'cause' would be without an effect.
If you are saying that there are causes without effects

- This circumstance does not exist.

4/3 If we eliminate the effect, i.e. form, and merely have the cause of form, this would be a cause without an effect.

Question: What is wrong with there being a cause with no effect?

Reply: Nowhere in the world do you find a cause without an effect, and why? It is by virtue of its effect that we call something a cause. If there is no effect, how can you call it a cause?

Moreover, if there is no effect within the cause, why should things not arise from no-cause? This topic is similar to that dealt with in chapter one, on the refutation of causality. Therefore, no cause exists without an effect.

Moreover:

4v4 If form were already existent,
Then it would have no use for a 'cause of form'.
If form did not exist
Then, too, it would have no use for form.

4/4 In neither case is there a cause for form. If form pre-existed in the cause, the cause would not be called the cause of form. If no form pre-existed in the cause, in that case too the cause would be termed the cause of form.

Question: If both these cases are wrong, then what is wrong with there being simply uncaused form?

Reply:

4v5 For form to exist and yet be uncaused -
This is altogether wrong

For this reason, one who has insight
Should not analyse forms.

4/5 Whether the effect inheres in the cause, or whether no effect inheres in the cause: such matters remain inconceivable. How much more so the existence of form without cause? This is why it is said 'for form to exist and yet be uncaused - this is altogether wrong', and therefore one who has insight should not analyse form.

'Analyser' is a name for the common man[87] who, bound by ignorance, desire and attachment to form, consequently develops from his perverted views distinctions and vain arguments, speculating that the effect inheres or does not inhere in the cause, and so forth. If you search for form in this way, it is never attainable, and therefore a man of insight[88] should not analyse.

Further:

4v6 If (you say that) the effect resembles the cause,
This is not correct.
If (you say that) the effect does not resemble the cause
This too is incorrect.

4/6 If (you say that) the effect and the cause resemble each other, this is not correct, because the cause is subtle, the effect gross. Cause and effect, form and function[89] etc. are different from each other. Just as cloth is similar to thread, but we do not call thread 'cloth', for threads are many but cloth is one, so we cannot say that cause and effect resemble each other. To say that cause and effect do not resemble each other is also wrong, for just as hempen thread does not make thin silk, and coarse thread will not produce fine cloth, so

we cannot say that cause and effect are dissimilar.[90] Both ideas are wrong, so there is neither form, nor cause-of-form.

4v7 The skandha of reception, the skandha of conception
the skandhas of predisposition and consciousness
And all remaining dharmas,
May be taken together with the skandha of form.

4/7 The (other) four skandhas and all dharmas should also be contemplated and refuted in the same way. And now the author, wishing to extol the idea of emptiness, says in a verse;

4v8 If a man has a question
And you try to answer it without emptiness,
You will be unable to make an answer
It will be wholly the same as the other's doubts.[91]

4v9 If a man makes a criticism
Explaining the other's errors without recourse to emptiness
He will not succeed in his criticism
It will be wholly the same as the other's doubts.

4/9 If, during a discussion, each party seizes on to a particular position and they debate without reference to the idea of emptiness they will never conclude the debate, and all will be together in doubt. For example, a man says 'a jug is impermanent'. His opponent says 'why is it impermanent'? and he replies: 'because it arises from an impermanent cause'. This is not what one would call an answer. Why not? Because there is still the uncertainty of not knowing whether the cause is permanent or impermanent.

(7a25) If, wishing to explain the other's erroneous views, he simply declares, without relying on emptiness, that all dharmas are impermanent, this is not what one would call a criticism, and why? Because you by your 'impermanence' have refuted my 'permanence' but I by my 'permanence' can refute your 'impermanence', saying that if things truly were impermanent there would be no karma and consequences, that the dharmas of eye and ear, etc., would cease every instant and that there would be no distinctions (between sin and merit etc.). Such fallacies as these will never succeed as criticisms, being at the same level as the opponent's doubts.

(7b1) However, if one relies on emptiness to refute permanence, no error is involved, and why? Because such a man does not cling to the mark of 'emptiness'. Therefore if one even wants to debate, he should rely upon the idea of emptiness; how much more so if he desires to seek the characteristic of release from affliction, and calm extinction.

Chapter 5 Contemplation of the six elements[92] 8 verses

5/0 Question: The six elements all have their fixed characteristics. It is because they have these fixed characteristics that they are the six elements.

Reply:

5v1 Before there was the characteristic of space
There was no dharma of space
If space had been pre-existent
Then it would have been without characteristics.

5/1 If the dharma of space had existed before there were the characteristics of space, space would have been without characteristics, and why? What we mean by the characteristic of space is 'a place without form'. Form is something created and impermanent. Before forms arise, not yet having arisen they do not cease, thus at that time there is no characteristic of space. It is only because there is form that there are places without form. To be a place without form is what is meant by the characteristic of space.

Question: What is wrong in saying that there is space without characteristics?

Reply:

5v2 Such a dharma without characteristics
Is nowhere to be found
In a dharma without characteristics
Characteristics would have nothing to characterise.

5/2 If you search for dharmas without characteristics amongst either permanent or impermanent dharmas you will not find any. It is as the authors[93] say; "How do we know that 'This exists'

and 'This does not exist'? Because each entity has its own characteristics".[94] Arising, abiding and ceasing are the characteristics of active (things) and non-arising, non-abiding and non-ceasing are the characteristics of the inactive.[95] If space had no characteristics, it would not be space. Nor is it correct to say that it previously had no characteristics, but subsequently its characteristics manifested as characteristics. If it had no characteristics before, then there was no dharma to be characterised, and why?

5v3 Whether 'having characteristics' or 'not having characteristics'
No characteristic has any place in which to reside.
Nor does it reside in any other place
Apart from 'having characteristics' or 'not having characteristics'.

5/3 For example, having a hump, horns, hair at the end of the tail and a dewlap hanging below the neck, are called the characteristics of a cow, and apart from these characteristics there is no cow. If there were no cow, there would be nowhere for these various attributes to reside. This is why we say that characteristics have nowhere to manifest in an entity with no characteristics. In things which have characteristics, too, there is nowhere for (further) characteristics to reside, because the characteristics are already existent. As an example, the characteristics of fire do not reside in the characteristics of water,[96] because water already has its own characteristics.

Moreover, if characteristics were to abide in (a thing) without characteristics, then it would be uncaused,[97] and something which is uncaused is not regarded as a dharma. That which has

characteristics,[98] the characteristics,[99] and characterisation,[100] are always mutually interdependent, and there is no further third state of characterisation apart from a dharma either having characteristics or not having characteristics. This is why it says in the verse (v3) "nor does it reside in any other place apart from having characteristics or not having characteristics".

Further:

5v4 Because the dharma of 'characteristic' does not exist
There is likewise no dharma of 'characterisation'.
And because no dharma of characterisation exists,
No dharma of 'characteristic' exists either.

5/4 Since there is nowhere for a characteristic to reside, there is no dharma of 'characterisation'. Since there is no dharma of characterisation, there is no dharma of characteristic. Why is this? Because characterisation exists by virtue of characteristics, and characteristics exist by virtue of characterisation: the two are causally interdependent.

5v5 Therefore, there are no characteristics,
Neither is there any characterisation.
And apart from characteristics and characterisation,
No other entity exists.[101]

5/5 If you make a thorough investigation of causality from beginning to end, you will not be able to find a fixed nature for characteristics and characterisation. Since neither of these two can be discovered, all dharmas are completely inexistent.[102] All dharmas are completely comprised in these two dharmas of characteristic and characterisation, with either the characteristic bringing about the characterisation, or the

characterisation bringing about the characteristic. For example, smoke is regarded as a characteristic of fire, but on the other hand fire may be considered a characteristic of smoke.

Question: If there is no existence, then there must surely be non-existence?

Reply:

5v6 If we allow that there is no existence
Then how could there be non-existence?
And since there would be neither existence nor non-existence,
Who would be the knower of existence or non-existence?

5/6 When ordinary things either decay of themselves or are destroyed by others, they are termed non-existent. Non-existence does not exist in itself but derives its being from existence. This is why it is said, 'if we allow that there is no existence, then how could there be non-existence?' If even eyes' seeing and the ears' hearing cannot be found, how much more so 'inexistent entities'?

Question: (Granted) that because existence does not exist, non-existence does not exist either, yet surely there must be a knower of existence and non existence?

Reply: If there were such a knower, either he would have to reside in existence, or he would have to reside in non-existence. Since existence and non-existence have already been refuted, such a knower is equally refuted.

5v7 Know therefore that space
Is neither existent nor non-existent

Neither a characteristic nor characterisable[103]

And that the other five are the same as space.

5/7 Just as one may search for the characteristic of space in various ways but cannot find it, so the other five elements[104] are also the same.

Question: Space is neither the first nor the last (of the six elements), so why do you refute it first?[105]

Reply: Earth, water, fire and wind are causally combined, and therefore easily refuted, and because consciousness is the cause of pain and pleasure it is recognised to be impermanent and changeable and thus is easily refuted. Space does not possess such characteristics, but the ordinary man imagines it to be existent, so this is why we refute it first. Moreover, space has the function of supporting the four great (elements, fire, etc.), and consciousness exists by virtue of the four great elements.[106] Therefore we first refute the basic thing, and the others are automatically refuted.

Question: Ordinary people all see things as existent or non-existent. Why do you alone, in contradiction to the world, say that what is seen does not exist?

Reply:

5v8 The superficial see dharmas

As having the characteristics of existence or non-existence.

And thus are unable to perceive

The calm serenity of the cessation of views.[107].

5/8 When a person has not yet attained the Way,[108] he is unable to perceive the true character of dharmas,[109] and because of his desires and false perceptions he generates all kinds of vain

arguments. Seeing a dharma as it comes into being he asserts that it is 'existent'. Clinging to its characteristics he says it exists. Seeing a dharma ceasing to exist he asserts that it is cut off, and clinging to this characteristic he says that it is inexistent. The man of insight,[110] seeing that dharmas arise, extinguishes the view that they are non-existent, and seeing that they cease extinguishes the view that they exist.[111] Consequently, although there is something in regard to dharmas which he sees, it is like an illusion or a dream, so that he ceases even to hold a view of 'a Way free of outflows'.[112] How much more so other views?

Therefore, someone who does not perceive the calm tranquility of the cessation of views, will only see things as existing or see them as not existing.

Chapter 6 Contemplation of passion and the impassioned one[113]

10 verses

8/0 Question: The sutras say that desire, hatred and delusion[114] are the foundation of the world. Desire has various names. It is called love, or attachment, or passion, or lust, or desire, and there are other such names as these. Such obsessions depend upon living beings, and these living beings are 'impassioned'. Desire means the dharma of passion. Because of the dharma of passion and the impassioned one, there is desire. It is the same with the other two passions; where there is anger, there is an angry being, and where there is delusion, there is a deluded being. It is because of these three poisons[115] that the three forms of karmic activity arise,[116] and it is because of the three karmic activities that the three realms[117] arise, and all dharmas consequently have their existence.

Reply:

(8a22) Even although the sutras mention the names of the 'three poisons', if you seek for their reality you will not find them, and why?

6v1 If, separate from the (dharma of) passion
The impassioned being pre-existed independently,
Then surely the passion should arise
On account of this impassioned one.

6v2 If there were no impassioned one,
How could there be passion?
When passion exists or does not exist

It will be the same for the impassioned.

6/2 If there really is an established impassioned one beforehand, then there is no need for any further passion, because the impassioned one already has passion. If no impassioned one exists beforehand, in this case too no passion should arise, for there must first be an impassioned one for passion to arise subsequently. If there were no impassioned one beforehand, there would be no one to receive the passion. It is the same with passion itself. If passion really pre-existed apart from the individual it would be without a cause, so how could it arise? It would be like a fire without fuel. If no fixed passion existed beforehand, there would be no impassioned one. For this reason it says in the verse, 'when passion exists or does not exist, it will be the same for the impassioned'.

Question: If it is impossible for passion and the impassioned one to arise one after the other in reciprocal dependence, what is wrong with them arising simultaneously?

Reply:

6v3 For the impassioned one and the passions
To be established both together is not correct,
For if the impassioned and the passions could combine
They would not be mutually dependent.

6/3 If passion and the impassioned were established simultaneously, they would not be reciprocally dependent. There would be passion independent of the impassioned and there would be the impassioned independent of passion, and these two would be permanencies, being already established and without any causes. Once permanence is admitted many errors follow, but no

liberation. Furthermore, we will now refute passion and the impassioned in terms of unity[118] and difference.

6v4 If the impassioned and passion are one,
How can one dharma combine?
If the impassioned and passion are different,
How can different dharmas combine?

6/4 Either passion and the impassioned combine as one dharma, or they combine as different dharmas. If they are one then they do not combine, and why? How can one dharma combine with itself? It is like a fingertip which cannot touch itself. As for them combining as different dharmas, this too is impossible, and why? Because they are different. If each dharma is already complete then there is absolutely no need for further combination, for even though combined, they will still remain different.

Moreover, unity and difference are both impossible, and why?

6v5 If there is combination of one thing.
It should be combination without any associating.[119]
If there is combination of different things
This too should be combination without any associating.

6/5 If passions and the impassioned were one, this would perforce be called a combination, and the passions and the impassioned ought to be separate from any other causes. Moreover, if they were one, there ought not to be the two names, 'the passions' and 'the impassioned'. Passion is a dharma, the impassioned one is an individual. For an individual and a dharma to be regarded as a unity, is a great confusion. If passion and the

impassioned one are different from each other, and yet you claim they are a combination, then they should not need any further causes and conditions to be a combination. And if they are different and yet combined, then they ought to combine even though remote from each other.

Question: That one thing does not combine may be granted, but we see with our eyes that different dharmas unite.

Reply:

6v6 If being different they nevertheless combine
What kind of things are passions and the impassioned?
For these two, having different characteristics before,
Are subsequently said to have the characteristic of combining.

6/6 If passion and the impassioned one initially have different, fixed characteristics, and then afterwards unite, this is no unity, and why? Because their two characteristics, being previously different, are then later arbitrarily spoken of as a unity.

Moreover:

6v7 If passion and the impassioned one
Pre-existed, each with different characteristics,
Since they already had different characteristics,
How can you say that they are a unity?

6/7 If passion and the impassioned one each previously had its own distinct characteristics, how can you now arbitrarily speak of them as a unity?

Again:

6v8 Having different characteristics does not work

So you want unity.
Unity of characteristics does not work at all,
So you again assert that there are differences.

6/8 Having failed to establish the relationship between passion and the impassioned one in terms of different characteristics, you then say that they have a unity of characteristics. But there is a flaw in this unity of characteristics and it does not establish (the relationship between) passion and the impassioned one. So then, in order to establish their unity of characteristics you again assert their difference in characteristics. You yourself have fixed (concepts) but what you assert, is unfixed, and why?

6v9 Since you have not established differences in characteristics
Their unity of characteristics remains unestablished.
Within what kind of difference, then
Do you wish to speak of a unity?

6/9 Since a difference in characteristics between the passions and the impassioned one has not been established, their unity of characteristics is not established either. In terms of what kind of difference do you want to speak of a unity of characteristics?

Further:

6v10 Just as in the passions and the impassioned one
Neither combination nor non-combination is found,
So all dharmas are the same;
Neither combination nor non-combination is found.

6/10 As with passion, so it is with hatred and delusion. As with the three poisons, so it is with all the afflictions and all

dharmas, which neither precede nor succeed each other and are neither combined nor separate, but are wholly established through causality.

Chapter 7 Contemplation of the three marks[120] 35 verses

7/0 Question: The sutras say that dharmas have the three marks of arising, abiding and ceasing. Things arise through the dharma of arising, they abide through the dharma of abiding, and they cease through the dharma of ceasing, and this is how the various dharmas exist.

Reply: Not so, and why? Because the three marks have no fixed (nature). Are these three marks to be regarded as active,[121] able to operate as[122] the marks of the active, or as inactive, yet able to operate as the marks of the active? Neither is correct, and why?

7v1 If 'arising' is active
Then it should have the three marks
If arising is not active
How can you call it a mark of the active?

7/1 If arising is active, it ought to have the three marks of arising, abiding and ceasing, but this is not correct and why? Because these (three) are mutually opposed. 'Mutually opposed' means that the mark of arising should cause dharmas to arise, the mark of abiding should cause dharmas to abide, and the mark of cessation should cause them to cease. When a dharma is at the point of arising, there should not be present the opposing dharmas, the marks of abiding and cessation. Simultaneity (of these marks) is thus incorrect, in the same way that light and darkness do not coexist. Therefore 'arising' cannot be an active dharma, and the same applies to the marks of abiding and ceasing.

(9a19) Question: If arising is not active, what is wrong with saying that it is inactive?

Reply: If arising were inactive, how could it possibly operate as marks of active dharmas? Why is this? It is because inactive dharmas have no nature. It is because of the cessation of activity that they are called inactive, and indeed this is why we speak of non-arising and non-ceasing as the marks of the unconditions. Moreover, they have no own-mark, and therefore they are non-dharmas and cannot operate as the marks of dharmas, just as a rabbit's horns or a tortoise's hair etc. cannot operate as the marks of dharmas. Therefore arising is not inactive, and the same goes for abiding and ceasing.

Further:

7v2 The three marks, whether combined or separate,
Cannot be marked.
For how in one place, at one time
Could there be three marks?

7/2 Whether (you say that) these marks of arising, abiding and ceasing can operate as the marks of active dharmas individually, or they operate as the marks of active dharmas by acting in combination; neither is correct, and why? You may say that they operate individually; but in any one place either there exists a mark or there does not exist a mark. When something is arising, there (should be) no abiding or ceasing. When it is abiding there should be no arising or ceasing. When it is ceasing there should be no arising or abiding.

You may say that they operate in combination; but they are mutually exclusive. How can you say that they exist

simultaneously? If you say that the three makrs themselves have three marks, this is incorrect too, and why?

7v3 If you say that arising, abiding and ceasing
Themselves possess the marks of the active
This, if so, would make for an endless (regression).
If not, they would not be active.

7/3 If you say that arising, abiding and ceasing themselves have the marks of active (dharmas), then arising itself would have an arising,[123] an abiding and a ceasing, and these three marks would again each have their own marks, and if this were so it would be endless. If, on the other hand, you say that they have no marks themselves, then these three marks ought not to be called active dharmas, and they will be unable to operate as the marks of active dharmas.

Question: You state that the three marks would lead to an endless regression, but this is not correct. Although arising, abiding and ceasing are active, there is no endless regression. Why is this?

7v4 That which arises in the arising-of-arising
Produces another 'original arising'.
What arises in that original arising
Produces the arising of arising in return.

7/4 When a dharma arises, seven dharmas, including the dharma itself, arise together: (1) the dharma, (2) arising, (3) abiding, (4) ceasing, (5) arising-of-arising, (6) abiding-of-abiding, (7) ceasing-of-ceasing. In these seven dharmas original arising can produce the six dharmas

excepting itself. Arising-of-arising produces original arising, and original arising produces arising-of-arising. Thus the three marks, though active, are not an endless series.

Reply:

7v5 If, as you say, the arising-of-arising
Can produce original arising
Since arising-of-arising comes from original arising
How can it produce original arising?

7/5 If the arising of arising can produce original arising, then such an arising-of-arising cannot be said to have arisen from original arising, and why? If arising-of-arising arises from original arising, how can it produce original arising?

Furthermore:

7v6 If, as you say, original arising
Can produce arising-of-arising
Then, original arising arising from it,
How could it produce arising-of-arising?

7/6 If you assert that original arising is able to produce the arising-of-arising, then this original arising cannot be said to arise from the arising-of-arising, and why? Because original arising arises from the arising-of-arising. How can it produce arising-of-arising? The dharma of the arising-of-arising is supposed to produce original arising, yet the arising-of-arising cannot now produce original arising. When arising-of-arising has not yet acquired its own self-substance,[125] how can it produce original arising? Hence original arising cannot produce arising-of-arising.

Question: It is at the moment of arising of arising-of-arising,

neither before nor after, that it can produce original arising. Just at the moment of arising of arising-of-arising it can produce original arising ...

Reply: Not so, and why?

7v7 If at the moment when arising-of-arising arises,
It can produce original arising.
Arising-of-arising not yet existing,
How can it produce original arising?

7/7 It could perhaps be, as you say, that at the moment when arising-of-arising arises it can produce original arising - but in fact it would not yet exist. Therefore, at the instant when arising-of-arising arises, it is impossible for it to produce original arising.

Further:

7v8 If original arising, at the moment of its arising,
Could produce the arising-of-arising.
Original arising not yet existing,
How could it produce arising-of-arising?

7/8 It could perhaps be, as you say, that at the moment of original arising's arising it could produce the arising-of-arising, but in fact it would not yet exist, hence original arising, at its moment of arising could not give rise to the arising-of-arising.

Question:

7v9 Just as a lamp can illumine itself
And also illumine others,
So, in the same way, the dharma of arising
Produces itself and produces other things.

7/9 Just as a light brought in to a dark room completely illumines

every object, and also illumines itself, so also arising is similar; it can produce other things and it can produce itself.

Reply: Not so, and why?

7v10 In a light there is naturally no darkness
And in the place where it abides there is no darkness.
'Destruction of darkness' is what is meant by light.
Where there is no darkness there is no light.

7/10 The substance of light is itself without darkness, and places reached by the light are also without darkness. Since light and dark are opposites, light means the destruction of darkness. Where there is no darkness there is no light. How can you say that the lamp illuminates both itself and other things?

Question: The lamp does not have light before it is produced, and it does not have light after it is produced, it is simply that at the moment of production of the light it is able to illumine itself and illumine others.

Reply:

7v11 How could a lamp at the moment of arising
Be able to destroy darkness?
Such a lamp at the first instant of arising
Cannot penetrate the darkness.

7/11 At the instant of its arising the light is said to be half arisen and half not-yet-arisen. If the substance of the light is not yet complete, how can it destroy the darkness? Moreover, the light cannot reach[126] the darkness, just as a man, catching a thief, considers him nullified.[127] If you claim that light, even though it does not reach the darkness nevertheless destroys the darkness, this too is wrong, and why?

7v12 If a light, before it reached darkness,
Could nevertheless destroy the darkness,
A light in here
Would destroy all darkness.

7/12 If a light had the power to destroy darkness without reaching it, then a lamp lit here would be able to destroy darkness everywhere, because the two would have no contact. Moreover, a light should not (be said to) illumine itself and illumine others, and why?

7v13 If a light could illumine itself
And could illumine other things
Darkness, too could darken itself
And also darken other things.

7/13 If light, being the opposite of darkness, can illumine itself and also illumine other things, then darkness, being the opposite of light, should also darken itself and other things. If darkness, being the opposite of light cannot darken both itself and other things, then light, being the opposite of darkness, should likewise be unable to illumine itself and other things. Therefore light is no illustration. Because we have not yet exhaustively refuted the causes and conditions of 'arising', we must now further expound them.

7v14 When arising has not yet arisen
How can it produce itself?
If, already arisen, it produces itself,
Being already arisen, why would it need to arise?

7/14 On an occasion when arising produces itself, either it will arise when it has already arisen, or it will arise when it has not

yet arisen. If it arises without being arisen then it is not a dharma, and if it is not a dharma, how can it produce itself? If you say that it arises when already arisen, then it may be considered as already complete, and there is no need for any further arising, just as something that has already been made should not be made again. So, whether already arisen or not yet arisen, neither of these two arises, and consequently there is no arising. You earlier said that arising was like a lamp in that it could both produce itself and produce others. This is not correct, and the same goes for abiding and ceasing. Again:

7v15 Arising is not produced after it has arisen,
Nor is it produced before it has arisen.
Nor is it produced at the same time as it arises
This has already been dealt with in (the chapter on) 'going and coming'.

7/15 'Arising' means that by a combination of causes there is arising. In something already produced there is no activity, and hence no arising, and in something not yet produced there is no activity and hence no arising. In the instant of arising there is also none. You cannot have an instant of arising separated from a dharma of 'arising', and you cannot have a dharma of arising separate from the instant of arising. How can there be arising in the moment of arising? This point has already been dealt with in (the chapter on) going and coming.

(10a25) A dharma which has already arisen cannot arise. Why is this? For something already arisen to arise again and continue thus repeatedly would be endless, like something already made being made again.

Moreover if, after having arisen, it were again to arise, by what dharma of arising would it arise? Its mark of arising would not yet have arisen, yet you say that it arises after already having arisen. This contradicts your own statement, and why? Although the mark of arising has not yet arisen you say there is arising. If you say that there is arising even though something has not yet arisen, the dharma can either be already arisen, and yet still arise, or it can be not-yet-arisen, and yet still arise. You earlier said that it arose after having already arisen, but this is not settled.

Again, just as something already burnt cannot burn again, and something already gone cannot go again, for the same reasons as apply in these cases, something already arisen cannot arise again.

(10b4) A dharma not yet arisen does not arise either, and why? If a dharma has not yet arisen, it cannot combine with its productive causes, and if it does not combine with its productive causes, then there is no arising of the dharmas. If dharmas arose without having combined with their productive causes, then there would be action without dharmas of action, going without dharmas of going, passion without dharmas of passion, anger without dharmas of anger and delusion without dharmas of delusion, and such being the case all dharmas in the world would be negated. Therefore, a not-yet-arisen dharma does not arise.

(10b9) Moreover, if a dharma not yet arisen could arise, all dharmas in the world not yet arisen should arise. All the ordinary people

in whom enlightenment has not yet arisen could now produce the dharma of imperishable bodhi[128] (enlightenment). An arhat[129] freed from the afflictions would now develop the afflictions, and hares without horns would now produce them, but this is not right. Therefore dharmas do not arise when they are not yet arisen.

(10b14) Question: If dharmas do not arise when they are not yet arisen, it is because they do not yet have causes; they lack doing, doer, time and space, etc., and this is why they do not arise. If conditions such as doing, doer, time and space were combined then the not-yet-arisen dharma would arise. Thus for you to say that no dharmas at all arise that are not-yet arisen is not correct.

(10b18) Reply: If a dharma is produced by the combination of conditions such as time, space, etc., then it is not a pre-existent thing that arises, nor a non-pre-existent thing that arises, nor a both pre-existent and non-pre-existent thing that arises, for these three (possibilities) have already been refuted. Consequently something already arisen does not arise, and something not yet arisen does not arise.

(10b20) In the moment of arising there is no arising either, and why? (Because) the already-risen part does not arise, and the not-yet-arisen part does not arise, as has already been shown. Furthermore, if there were a moment of arising separate from arising, this moment of arising would itself have to arise, but there is no moment of arising separate from arising, and therefore in the moment of arising there is no arising either.

(10b24) Moreover, if you say that the moment of arising itself arises, there would be the fallacy of two arisings; the first known as the moment of arising and the second being the arising within the moment of arising, and to have these two is incorrect. There are not two dharmas involved, for how can there be two arisings? Therefore, 'in the moment of arising too, there is no arising'.

(10b27) Moreover, before the dharma of arising is manifested, there is no moment of arising, and since there is no moment of arising, what could arising depend on? Therefore you cannot say that the moment of arising arises. According to our investigation then, there is no arising, in what has already arisen, there is no arising in what has not yet arisen, and there is no arising in the moment of arising. Because there is no arising, arising is not established, and arising not being established, abiding and ceasing also cannot be established. Since arising, abiding and ceasing cannot be established, active dharmas cannot be established. This is why it says in the verse that this has already been dealt with in relation to the gone, the not-yet-gone and the moment of going.

Question:

(10c3) We do not exactly[130] say that there is arising in the already-arisen, arising in the not-yet-arisen and arising in the moment of arising, but merely that through the combination of causal conditions there is arising.

Reply: Even though you state it like this, it is still incorrect, and why?

7v16 If you say that there is arising in the moment of arising
This fact has not been established.
In the moment when conditions are combining,
How can there be arising?

7/16 Arising in the moment of arising has been refuted already for various reasons. How can you again say that there is arising as a result of the combination of causal conditions? Whether causal conditions are complete or incomplete, they are refuted together with arising.

Again:

7v17 If a dharma arises from conditions
Its nature will be calm extinction.[131]
Therefore arising and the moment of arising
Would both be nirvanic.[132]

7/17 Dharmas produced by conditions have no self-nature and are consequently nirvanic. Nirvana is considered to be non-existent, but this non-existence and the marks of this non-existence cut off the flow of words and put an end to all sophistries.[133] The meaning of 'conditions' may be likened to cloth which exists because of its threads, or a rush mat which exists because of the rushes. If the threads themselves had fixed characteristics, they would not come from hemp. If the cloth itself had fixed characteristics, it would not come from the threads, but in fact we do get cloth from threads, and threads from hemp, so threads have no fixed nature, and cloth has no fixed nature. It is like fire and fuel, which are established by the combination of causal conditions and have no self-nature. Without fuel there is no fire, and without fire

there is no fuel.

(10c20) All dharmas are like this; therefore dharmas arising from causal conditions have no self-nature, and having no self-nature are empty and unreal like a mirage. This is why the verse says that arising and the moment of arising are both nirvanic.[133] We should not say that there is arising of the moment of arising. Although you wish to establish by various reasonings[134] a characteristic of 'arising', these are all sophistries and do not have the characteristic of nirvana.

Question: There is definitely a differentiation between the three periods of time.[135] A dharma which belongs to the future may arise. If there are causes and conditions it will arise. How can you say that it will not arise?

Reply:

7v18 If there is a dharma which has not yet arisen,
And you say that it will arise,
If this dharma already exists
What need will it have for any further arising?

7/18 If, in the future period of time, there is a not-yet-arisen dharma which arises, since this dharma will already have arisen, why will it need to arise again? An existent dharma should not have to arise again.

Question: Although it will exist in the future, this is not like the characteristic of (being in) the present. We call it arisen when it takes on the characteristic of being in the present.

Answer: The characteristic of present existence is not in the

future. Since it is not in the future, how can you say that a future dharma arises?

(11a3) If something exists it is not regarded as future, but as present. What is present has no need to arise again, and since neither of these arise, there is no arising. Furthermore; you say that arising at the moment of arising can also give rise to something else. We must now give a further explanation:

7v19 You say that there is an arising at the moment of arising
Then there must be something which is produced;
How can there be any further arising
Which can produce this arising?

7/19 If an arising in the moment of arising can produce something else, what is it that this arising in turn produces?

7v20 If you say that there are repeated arisings,
Then the arising of arising will continue endlessly.
If there is arising apart from the arising of arising,
Then dharmas can produce themselves.[136]

7/20 If there is repeated arising within arising, then arising will be endless. If there were no such repeated arising and yet there were arising, then all dharmas could produce themselves, but in fact this is not the case.
Further:

7v21 Existing dharmas should not arise
Non-existent dharmas likewise should not arise.
Existent and non-existent together do not arise.

This idea has been discussed previously.[137]

7/21 Ordinarily, whatever has arisen is regarded either as an existent dharma which has been produced, or as an inexistent dharma which has been produced, or as a both existent-and-inexistent dharma which has been produced. None of these is correct, and this has already been explained. Beyond these three possibilities there is no other (form of) arising, and consequently there is no arising.

Further:

7v22 At the moment of cessation of dharmas -
At this point there should be no arising.
And if dharmas have no cessation
Then there is no question of arising at all.

7/22 If a dharma has the mark of cessation, then this dharma should not arise, and why? Because the two characteristics are mutually opposed. One is the mark of cessation by which we know that a dharma is ceasing, the other is the mark of arising, by which we know that a dharma is arising. The two marks are the opposite of each other, and they cannot co-exist simultaneously, so a dharma with the mark of cessation cannot arise.

(11a23) Question: Even though dharmas with the mark of cessation should not arise, surely dharmas without the mark of cessation may arise?

Reply: Since all active dharmas are ceasing every instant, there are no non-ceasing dharmas.[138] Apart from active dharmas, there are no fixed, inactive dharmas. 'Inactive dharma' is merely a designation, and this is why we say that if dharmas do not

cease this problem (of arising) does not occur.

Question: Even if dharmas have no arising, surely they have abiding?

Reply:

7v23 Non-abiding dharmas do not abide
Abiding dharmas do not abide either.
Nor does the moment of abiding abide.
Since they do not arise, how can they abide?

7/23 Non-abiding dharmas do not abide because they have no mark of abiding. Abiding dharmas similarly do not abide, and why? Because they already have abiding. Abiding exists by virtue of movement.[139] If a dharma of abiding already exists it will not need to abide again. There is no abiding, in the moment of abiding either, and since there is no moment of abiding apart from abiding and not abiding, there is no abiding. Even though you search everywhere in this way for abiding you will not be able to find it.[140] It is the same as no arising, and if there is no arising, how can there be abiding?

Further:

7v24 When dharmas are ceasing
They cannot be abiding
And if dharmas do not cease,
The problem (of abiding) will not occur at all.

7/24 If a dharma has the mark of cessation, then this dharma will not have the mark of abiding, and why? Because in the one dharma there would be two contradictory marks, the first being the mark of ceasing, the second being the mark of abiding. It is not possible for abiding and ceasing to exist in the same

time and place. Therefore you cannot say that a dharma with the mark of ceasing is abiding.

Question: Surely if dharmas are not ceasing they can abide?

Reply: There are no dharmas which are not ceasing, and why?

7v25 Every dharma which exists
Has the marks of old age and death.
You will never see any dharma
Abiding without old age and death.

7/25 All dharmas at the moment of their arising are impermanent. Always accompanying impermanence are two things, namely old age and death. All dharmas are the same in this respect, and because old age and death are always present there is no moment of abiding.

Further:

7v26 Abiding is not abiding of its own marks,
Nor is it abiding of the marks of something else
Just as arising does not produce itself
Nor does it produce the marks of anything else.

7/26 If there were a dharma of abiding, then it could either be regarded as the abiding of its own marks or as the abiding of another thing's marks, but neither of these is correct. If it is its own marks which abide then it would be considered permanent. All active dharmas arise from causal conditions, and if a dharma of abiding were self-abiding, it would not be considered active. If abiding were the abiding of own marks, dharmas too ought to abide in their own marks. Just as the eye cannot see itself, so it is with abiding.

(11b24) If it is abiding of another thing's marks, that abiding would again have to abide, and abiding would be an endless regression. Moreover, we see different dharmas producing different marks, but we cannot find uncaused, different dharmas which nevertheless have different marks, because their different marks are not fixed. To say that there is abiding on the basis of different marks is not correct.

Question: If there is no abiding, surely there must be ceasing?
Reply: No, and why?

7v27 A dharma already ceased does not cease
And when not yet ceased also does not cease.
At the moment of ceasing, too, there is no ceasing.
With no arising, how can there be ceasing?

7/27 If a dharma has already ceased, it does not cease, because it has previously ceased. Similarly, if it has not yet ceased it does not cease, because it is without the mark of cessation. It does not cease at the moment of ceasing either, for apart from these (first) two there is no further 'moment of ceasing'. Thus, according to our investigation the dharma of cessation is nothing but non-arising, for where there is no arising how can there be ceasing?
Further:

7v28 If dharmas did abide
They could not cease.
If dharmas did not abide,
Then, too, they could not cease.

7/28 If dharmas really did abide there would be no cessation, and

why? Because they would have the mark of abiding. If a dharma of abiding ceased there would be two marks, the mark of abiding and the mark of ceasing. Therefore, you cannot say that abiding contains ceasing, just as, in the same way being born and dying cannot exist simultaneously. But if dharmas do not abide, there is no cessation either, and why? Because they are without the mark of abiding. If they are without the mark of abiding then they are not dharmas, and not being dharmas, how can they cease?

Further:

7v29 A certain dharma, at a certain moment
Does not cease in that same moment
A certain dharma, at another moment
Does not cease in that other moment.

7/29 If a dharma has the mark of ceasing, then either this dharma's ceasing is a mark belonging to itself, or its ceasing is a mark of something else, but neither is correct, and why? As an example, milk does not cease at the moment when it is milk, for while it is milk the mark of milk definitely abides. At the time when it is not milk, it does not cease either, since if it is not milk you cannot say that it is ceasing to be milk.

Further:

7v30 It is the same with all dharmas;
No mark of arising can be found
Because of the mark of non-arising,
There is also the mark of no-ceasing.

7/30 As found in the foregoing investigation, no mark of arising can be discovered in any dharma, and at the same time there is no

mark of cessation. We have refuted arising, and therefore there is no arising. Since there is no arising, how can there be ceasing? If your mind is still undecided, I will now expound further reasons for cessation to be denied.

7v31 If a dharma is existent.
Then there is no cessation.
There could not be in one dharma
The marks of both being and non-being.

7/31 When a dharma is existent you may seek for a mark of cessation but you will not be able to find it, and why? How could there be, within one dharma, the marks of both being and non-being? They are like light and shadow which cannot occupy the same place.

Further:

7v32 If a dharma is non-existent
Then there is no cessation
Just as, not having a second head
You cannot cut it off.

7/32 If a dharma is non-existent, there is no characteristic of cessation. It is like a second head or a third hand - not having them, you cannot cut them off.

Further:

7v33 A dharma does not cease by virtue of its own marks,
Nor by the marks of something else.
Just as there is no arising from own marks
Nor arising from the marks of another.

7/33 As previously explained in relation to the mark of arising;

arising does not produce itself, nor does it arise from something else. To say that it arises out of its own substance would be incorrect, for everything is produced by causal conditions, and just as a finger tip is unable to touch itself, so arising cannot produce itself. Arising from some other source is also wrong, and why? When arising has not yet occurred, there should be no arising from anything else. Since there is no such arising, there is no self-substance, and since there is no self-substance there is likewise no other, thus arising from another is incorrect. The dharma of cessation is also like this: there is no cessation by own marks or by marks of others.

Further:

7v34 Arising, abiding and ceasing not being established,
There is consequently no activity
Since there are no active dharmas
How can there be inactive ones?[141]

7/34 You earlier stated that activity existed because of the marks of arising, abiding and ceasing. It is because of activity that there is inactivity. We have now shown by reasoned investigation that these three marks are untenable, so how can you say that there is activity? As we said before, there exist no dharmas without marks. Since there are no active dharmas, how can there be inactive dharmas? The characteristics of the inactive are non-arising, non-abiding and non-ceasing.

Stopping of the marks of activity is what is meant by 'the characteristics of inactivity'. The inactive has no special marks of its own; the marks of the inactive are contingent upon these three marks. For example, heat is the mark of fire,

hardness is the mark of earth, and coldness is the mark of water, but the inactive is not like this.

Question: If these (marks of) arising, abiding and ceasing are absolutely non-existent, how can you speak their names in this treatise?

Reply:

7v35 Like an illusion, like a dream
Like a Gandharva-city;[142]
The arising, abiding and ceasing of which we speak
Have marks such as these.

7/35 The characteristics of arising, abiding and ceasing are not fixed and real. Unenlightened people with their voracious attachments assert that they are fixed and real, so saints and sages, out of pity and compassion and a desire to bring to an end their perverted views, revert to using those terms to which people are attached. Though the expressions are the same, their minds are different. To speak thus of arising, abiding and ceasing should not deserve criticism, just as the acts of an illusionist should not be censured, because of his motive. There should be no feelings of grief or joy in this regard; one should simply see with one's eyes and that is all, just as one should not seek in the real world for something seen only in a dream, and just as, for example, a Gandharva-city, manifesting with the sunrise is not real, but merely a conventional designation which soon ceases to be. 'Arising', 'abiding' and 'ceasing' are also like this. The unenlightened man differentiates them as existents; the sage investigates and finds them untenable.

Chapter 8 Contemplation of Deed and Doer 12 verses

(8/0) Question: Doing, the doer, and the deed which he performs, manifestly exist. Karmic recompense exists by virtue of the combination of these three elements, so there must be a doer and a deed.

Reply: In chapter after chapter above, we have negated all dharmas, with nothing remaining. The three marks, for example, have been negated, and since the three marks do not exist, there are no active dharmas. Since active (dharmas) do not exist there are no non-active ones, and since there are neither active nor non-active dharmas, there is no doing, and no doer of any dharma whatsoever. If these are active, then they have been negated already, being included in the active. If inactive, they have been negated already being included among the inactive. You should not question this again, yet being deeply immersed in mental attachments, you have raised more questions, to which we must now give more replies:

8v1 If there is a fixed, existent doer
He does not do a fixed deed.
If there is no fixed, existent doer
He does not do a non-fixed deed.

8/1 If there is a fixed, pre-existent doer, and a fixed, existent deed, then there should be no doing. If there is no fixed pre-existent doer and no fixed deed, then also there should be no doing, and why?

8v2 A fixed deed has no doing,
And such a deed has no doer

A fixed doer has no doing
And a doer also has no deed.

8/2 If there is a fixed, pre-existent deed, then there should not be any additional doer. Even so (you might argue) there should be a deed apart from the doer - but this is not so. If there is a fixed, pre-existent doer, then there should not be any additional deed. (Perhaps) even so there should be a doer apart from the deed? - but this is not so. Therefore, if you have a fixed doer or a fixed deed there cannot be doing, and if you have a non-fixed doer and a non-fixed deed then there cannot be doing either, and why? Because from the beginning they never existed. Even an existent doer and existent deed cannot do. How much less a non-existent doer and non-existent deed! Further:

8v3 If there were a fixed doer
And a fixed deed
Both the doer and the deed
Would fall into causelessness

8/3 If there were a fixed, pre-existent doer and fixed existent deed, and you say that there is a doer who does, then this constitutes causelessness. If there is a doer apart from the deed done, or a deed apart from its doer, then they exist without arising from causal conditions.

Question: What is wrong in saying that both doer and deed exist, without arising from causal conditions?

Reply:

8v4 If you fall into causelessness
Then there is no cause and no effect.

No doing and no doer
And no dharma of deed involved.

8v5 If there are no dharmas of doing,
Then there is no sin or merit
Where there is no sin or merit
No recompense for sin or merit exists either.[143]

8v6 Where there is no recompense for sin or merit,
There is also no nirvana.
And whatever one may do
Is completely vacuous and without effect.

8/6 If you fall into causelessness, all dharmas become causeless and effect-less. A dharma which is able to produce is called a 'cause', and the dharma which is produced is called an effect. If these two are non-existent, then because these two do not exist there will be no doing and no doer, and no dharma of deed involved. Also there will be no sin or merit, and because there is no sin or merit there will be no recompense or retribution for sin and merit and thus no path to nirvana. Therefore, there cannot be causeless production.

(12c14) Question: What is wrong in saying that the doer is not fixed, and that he does a non-fixed deed?

Reply: Even if one element is missing, it is impossible to begin a deed. How much more so when both are lacking! It is like an apparition which has its abode in apparent space, existing merely as a designation without any doer or deed.

Question: If there is no doer and no deed, there cannot be

anything done, but if there is a doer and there is a deed, there should be doing.

Reply:

8v7 A doer, whether fixed or not fixed,
Cannot do two kinds of deeds.
For, since existence and non-existence are mutually opposed,
The two cannot exist together.

8/7 A doer, whether fixed or unfixed, cannot perform either fixed or unfixed deeds, and why? Because existence and non-existence are mutually opposed, and the two cannot exist in one place. Existence is fixed, non-existence is non-fixed, but one person is one entity, so how can he be both existent and non-existent?

Further:

8v8 An existent cannot do the non-existent.
A non-existent cannot do the existent.
As to there being both a doing and a doer
That error is as previously explained.

8/8 If the doer exists but the deed does not, how can there be anything which is done? If the doer is non-existent and the deed is existent, how again, can there be anything done? Why is this? As previously explained in regard to existence, if the deed pre-existed, what more would there be for the doer to do? If the deed was not pre-existent, how could he accomplish the deed? In this way one would negate sin and merit, causality, recompense and retribution. Therefore he says in the verse; 'An existent cannot do the non-existent, A non-existent cannot do the existent. As to there existing both a doing and a doer, That error is as previously explained.'

Further:

8v9 A doer does not do a fixed deed
Neither does he do a non-fixed deed,
Nor a fixed-and-non-fixed deed.
Those errors have already been explained.

8/9 A 'fixed deed' has already been refuted, as has a'non-fixed deed', and a deed which is both fixed and non-fixed. Now, wishing to refute all these at once, he utters this verse. Therefore, a doer cannot do these three kinds of deed. Now, the three kinds of doer also cannot do a deed, and why?

8v10 A doer, whether fixed, or non-fixed,
Or both-fixed-and-non-fixed.
Cannot do a deed.
Those errors have already been explained.

8/10 A doer, whether fixed, not fixed, or both fixed-and-not-fixed, cannot do a deed, and why? It is for the same reasons as the earlier kinds of error, which we should explain at length here. Thus, wherever you search for a doer and a deed, you will be utterly unable to find them.

Question: If you say that there is no deed and no doer, then you in turn fall into causelessness.
Reply: Deeds arise from causality. They are conventionally termed 'existent', but they have no fixed (nature), and are not as you describe them. Why is this?

8v11 The doer exists by virtue of the deed,
The deed exists by virtue of the doer,

This is how we establish the meaning of 'deed'
There is nothing to add beyong this.

8/11 A deed is non-fixed from the beginning. A deed originates because of a person, and by virtue of the deed, he is a 'doer'. The doer is not fixed, it is because there is a deed that he is designated a 'doer'. It is through the combination of these two elements that deed and doer are established. If something arises from a combination then it has no self-nature, and having no self-nature it is empty. Because it is empty there is nothing which is produced, but in accordance with the thinking of ordinary unenlightened people we make distinctions, saying 'there is a deed' or 'there is a doer'. But in the highest sense there is no deed and no doer.

Moreover:

8v12 In the same way that we negate deed and doer,
So (we refute) reception and the recipient.[144]
All other dharmas too
Should be negated thus.

8/12 Just as deed and doer cannot be separated from each other and, not being separable, are therefore non-fixed, and having no fixed (nature) therefore have no self-nature, so it is with reception and the receiver. Reception stands for the body of the five skandhas; the recipient is the person. There are no five skandhas apart from the person, and no person apart from the five skandhas, which merely arise from causality. Just as with receiving and the recipient, so it is with all other dharmas, which should be negated in the same way.

Chapter 9 Contemplation of a substrate[145] 12 verses

Question: Some people say;

9v1 The faculties of eye, ear etc.,[146]
The dharmas of pain and pleasure etc.,[147]
Who has such things as these?
Such a one is called the 'substrate'.

9v2 If there were no substrate
Who would have the dharmas of eye etc.?
We should realise from this
That there is a pre-existent substrate.

9/2 'The functions of eye, ear etc.' means the functions of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and life. 'The dharmas of pain and pleasure etc.' means dharmas of the mind and mental configurations[148] such as reception of pain, reception of pleasure, reception of neither pain nor pleasure, conception, volition, remembrance etc.

Some authors say, 'before the dharmas of eye, etc. come into existence, there must surely be some substrate, and it is dependent on this substrate that the functions of the eye, etc. develop. If there were no substrate, on what would the functions of body and eye, etc. depend for their development?
Reply:

9v3 If, separate from the functions of eye etc.,
And the dharmas of pain and pleasure,
There were a pre-existent substrate,
How could we know it?

9/3 If, separate from the functions of eye, ear etc. and the dharmas of pain, pleasure etc., there were a pre-existent substrate, how could it be described, and how could we know about it? External dharmas such as pots, clothes etc., can be known by the function of the eye, etc. Inner dharmas can be known by the functions of pain and pleasure etc. As it says in the sutras, 'perishability is the characteristic of material form; the ability to receive is the characteristic of reception; to be able to know is the characteristic of consciousness'. You say that there is a pre-existent substrate separate from eye and ear, pain and pleasure, etc., but how can we know about it or say that it exists?

Question:

(13b22) Some writers[149] say that breathing in and out, looking and winking, lifespan, thinking, pain and pleasure, hate, love, excitation and so on are characteristics of a soul. Without a soul, how could there be characteristics such as breathing in and out, etc? Therefore we should accept that there is a pre-existent substrate apart from the functions of eye, ear, etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure.

Reply:

(13b25) If such a soul does exist, then it must be either inside the body, like a pillar within a wall, or outside the body, like armour worn by a man. If it were inside the body, then the body could not be perishable, since the soul would always be dwelling inside it. Therefore to say that a soul dwells in the body is mere words, absurd and unfounded. If it dwells outside the body, covering the body like armour, then the body ought to be invisible, because the soul would closely cover it. Moreover,

it should not be perishable, yet we can see now that in reality the body does decay. Therefore we must know that there is no other pre-existing dharma, separate from pain and pleasure, etc.

(13c2) If you say that when an arm is cut off the soul shrinks back inside and cannot be cut off, then when the head is cut off (the soul) should also shrink back in and one should not die, but in fact one does die. Therefore we must know that (to speak of) a soul which is pre-existent and separate from pain and pleasure etc., is mere words, absurd and unfounded.

(13c5) Moreover, if you say that where the body is big, the soul is big, and where the body is small the soul is small, just as when a lamp is big its light is big, and where a lamp is small its light is small, then if the soul follows the body in this way it should not be permanent. If it accords with the body, then when there is no body there will be no soul, just as when a lamp is extinguished the light is extinguished. If the soul is impermanent, then it is the same as the eye, the ear, pain and pleasure etc. Therefore we should know that there is no distinct soul pre-existing and separate from eye and ear, etc.

(13c10) Moreover, suppose that a man who is crazy, who is not responsible for himself, does something which he should not do. If there is a soul which is master of all one's actions, how can we say that the man is not responsible for himself? If madness does not afflict the soul, then it must be something which acts separately from the soul. Seeking thus in various ways for something which is separate from the functions of eye and ear, and the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc, we find no

such pre-existent substrate. Even though you insist that there is a pre-existent substrate apart from the function of eye and ear and the dharmas of pain and pleasure, no such entity exists, and why?

9v4 If, apart from eye and ear etc.,
There were a substrate
Then also, without a substrate
Eyes and ears, etc., should exist.

9/4 If there were a pre-existent substrate, separate from the functions of eye and ear etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc., then the functions of eye and ear etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc. should likewise exist apart from this substrate.

Question: It could be that the two things are separate from each other, perhaps only the substrate existing.
Reply:

9v5 Because of dharmas we know that there is a person.
Because of the person, we know that there are dharmas.
Apart from dharmas, how can there be a person?
Apart from a person, how can there be dharmas?

9/5 'Dharmas' means eye, ear, pain, pleasure etc.
'Person' means this substrate. You say that we know there is a person by virtue of there being dharmas, and we know that there are dharmas because there is a person. Now, how can there be a person apart from the dharmas of eye and ear etc., and how can there be dharmas of eyc and ear etc., apart from the person?
Further:

9v6 In all the functions of eye, ear etc.,
There is truly no substrate.
All the functions of eye and ear etc.,
With different characteristics, discriminate.[150]

9/6 In all the functions of eye and ear etc. and all the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc., there is truly no substrate. With the eye as its cause, and form as its condition, seeing-consciousness is produced. We know of the existence of all the functions of eye, ear etc. by means of this combination of causes and conditions, and not through some substrate. This is why it says in the verse, "In all the functions of eye, ear etc., there is truly no substrate." Each of the functions of eye, ear etc., can discriminate individually.

Question:

9v7 If in all the functions such as eye etc.,
There is no substrate.
How can eye etc., functioning separately,
Know objects?[151]

9/7 If there is no substrate in all the functions of eye and ear etc., and all the dharmas of pain and pleasure etc., then how can these individual functions know objects? There is no thinking in the functions of seeing and hearing etc., so they should not have knowledge, yet in fact they do know objects. We must realise (from this) that in addition to the functions of eye and ear etc., there is something which has the capacity to know objects.

Reply: If this were so, then either this knowing agent will inhere in each individual function, or there will be one knower in all the functions, but both ideas are erroneous, and why?

9v8 "The one who sees is the one who hears.
The one who hears is the one who receives.
All the functions are like this,
Consequently there must be a substrate".

9/8 "If the one who sees is also the one who hears, and the one who hears is also the one who receives, then there is one soul. Since all the functions of eye and ear etc., are like this, there must be a pre-existent substrate". Form, sound, fragrance, etc., not having a fixed knower, perhaps (the substrate) could use his eye to hear sounds, like a man seeing sounds in six ways[152] according to his will? If the hearer and seer were one, he could see sounds at will with the eye-function etc., but this is not the case.

9v9 If the seer and the hearer are each separate,
And the one who receives is also separate,
Then when seeing, there should also be hearing,
And thus the soul would be multiple.

9/9 If the seer, the hearer and the receiver are different from each other, then at the time of seeing there should also be hearing, and why? Because the hearer would exist separately from the seer, and in the same way souls ought to be operating simultaneously in the nose, the tongue and the body. If this were so, though the individual were one, his souls would be many, and he would be knowing the world via all his functions simultaneously, but in reality this is not the case. Therefore a seer, a hearer and a recipient are not employed together. Further:

9v10 All the functions of eye and ear etc.,

And all the dharmas of pain, pleasure etc.,
- The elements from which they are produced
Those elements have no souls.

9/10 If someone says that there is a separate substrate apart from the functions of eye, ear, etc., and the dharmas of pain, pleasure etc., this has already been refuted. Now, as for the four elements which give rise to eye and ear etc., there is no substrate contained in these four elements.

Question: Even if it is true that there is no substrate in all the functions of eye and ear, etc., and all the dharmas of pain and pleasure, surely the functions of eye, ear etc., and the dharmas of pain and pleasure exist?

9v11 If the functions of eye and ear, etc.,
And the dharmas of pain and pleasure
Have no substrate.
Then the eye, etc. should not exist either.

9/11 If the dharmas of eye and ear, pain and pleasure etc., have no substrate, who has this eye and ear etc., and by what means do they exist? Therefore eye and ear etc., are also non-existent. Moreover:

9v12 In eyes, etc. there is no substrate,
Now and in the future there will be none.
Since there is none in the three periods of time,
There is no distinction between existence and non-existence.

9/12 (Though we) contemplate and search for a substrate, it never existed in the eye etc., and does not exist now, or in the future. Not existing in any of the three periods of time, it

is the nirvana of non-arising, in which there should be no obstacles.[153] If there is no substrate, then how can there be the eye, etc? Debates and vain arguments such as these consequently cease, and when vain arguments have ceased, all dharmas are empty.

Chapter 10 Examination of fire and fuel[154] 16 verses

10/0 Question: Surely receiving and a recipient exist, like fire and fuel, the recipient being the fire, and what is received being the fuel, which is to say the five skandhas.
Reply: This is not so, and why? Because neither fire nor fuel can be established. Fire and fuel may either be established as one dharma or established as two dharmas, but neither can (in fact) be established.

(14b18) Question: Let us leave aside for now the unity or difference of (these) dharmas, for if you say that fire and fuel are non-existent, how can you refute them by means of the characteristics of unity or difference? It is like a hare's horns or a tortoise's hair; being non-existent they cannot be refuted. We can see with our worldly eyes that things do exist, and we can subsequently examine them, just as there is metal, which can then be heated and forged. If there were no fire or fuel, we would not be able to examine them in terms of identity and difference. If you allow that there is unity and difference of dharmas, then you must recognise that fire and fuel exist, and if you allow that they exist, then this is to consider them as already existent.
Reply:

(14b24) In terms of conventional worldly expression, there would be no error, but whether one speaks of fire and fuel as one, or as different, they are not to be considered as (one) receiving (the other). Apart from conventional worldly expressions, there is nothing with which to argue. If we did not speak of fire and fuel, how could anything be refuted? If nothing is spoken

about, then meanings cannot be clarified. Thus, if a commentator wishes to refute existence and non-existence, inevitably he has to speak of existence and non-existence. He takes up (the terms) existence and non-existence but does not thereby accept existence and non-existence. He is following conventional worldly usage so there is no error involved. If putting words in one's mouth was at once to accept them, then for you to say 'destroy' would constitute self-destruction. It is the same with 'fire' and 'fuel'. Although the expressions exist, these are not accepted either. Therefore we may consider whether fire and fuel are one dharma or different dharmas, (and say) that neither can be established, and why?

10v1 If fire is the same as fuel,
Then the deed and the doer are one
If fire is different from fuel
Then fire would exist without fuel.

10/1 'Fire' is the flames, 'fuel' is the firewood. 'The doer' is the person, 'the deed' is the act. If fire and fuel are one, then doer and deed also should be one. If doer and deed are one, then the potter and his pot are one, the doer being the potter and the deed being the pot. (but) the potter is not the pot and the pot is not the potter, so how can they be regarded as one? Therefore, because the doer and the deed are not one, fuel and fire are also not one.

(14c10) If you say that, oneness being impossible, they must be different, this too is incorrect, and why? If fire and fuel are different, then there should be fires which exist quite

separately from fuel. If we distinguish this thing as a fire and that thing as fuel, then everywhere there would be fires without fuel, but in reality this does not happen, and consequently, they cannot be different.

Further:

10v2 In that case fire would exist eternally
Arising without fuel as its cause
Then burning would have no result
And we would call it ineffectual fire.[155]

10/2 If fire and fuel were different, then fires would burn permanently without depending on fuel. If they burned permanently they would be self-subsistent and not dependent on causes and conditions, and human effort would be in vain,[156] (but in fact) human effort may, by feeding a fire cause it to burn; this effect[157] manifestly exists, and therefore we know that the fire is not different from the fuel. Moreover, if fire were different from fuel then fire would be ineffectual, for what is burnt by a fire apart from its fuel? If this were so, fire would be ineffectual, but no such thing as ineffectual fire exists.

(14c22) Question: Why is it that, if fire arose independent of causes and conditions, human effort would also be in vain?

Reply:

10v3 If fire does not depend on fuel
Then it does not arise from causes and conditions.
If flames were permanently burning,
Human effort would be in vain.

10/3 If fire and fuel were different, then there would be fire

independent of any fuel. If there were fire independent of fuel, then fire would not be a dharma dependent on a cause, and consequently it would not have arisen from causes and conditions. Moreover, if fire and fuel were different then there ought to be permanent fire, but if there were permanent fire we should see this fire, separate and apart from fuel, and without any need at all of human effort, and why?

10v4 If you say that when something is burning
It constitutes fuel,
At the time when it is only firewood;
What thing is it that burns the fuel?

10/4 If you say that what was previously firewood is (only) called fuel,[158] when it is burning, this is not correct. But if fuel exists separately apart from fire, how can you say that when it is afire[159] it is (still) to be regarded as fuel?
Further:

10v5 If different, there would be no contact
And without contact there would be no burning.
Without burning there would be no extinguishing.[160]
And with no extinguishing there would be permanence.

10/5 If fire were different from fuel then fire would never come into contact with fuel, and why? Because they would not be established interdependently. But fire, if not established by interdependence, would be self-subsistent, and then what use would it have for fuel? Therefore, there would be no contact, but without contact there would be no fire and fuel. Why is this? Because there is nothing which can burn without contact. If there is no burning, there will be no extinguishing, which would mean permanence and own-mark,[161] and this is not correct.

Question:

10v6 Fire may be different from fuel
Yet it can come together with fuel
Just as this person comes together with that person,
And that other comes together with this person.[162]

10/6 Fire might be different from fuel, yet it could come in contact with fuel, just as a man comes together with a woman, and a woman comes together with a man.

Reply:

10v7 If you say that fire and fuel
Are separate from each other
This being so, a fire could
Come in contact with some other fuel.

10/7 If there were fuel separate from fire, and fire separate from fuel, and each was established individually, there could be fire coming in contact with fuel; but in reality this is not so, and why? Because there is no fuel apart from fire, and no fire apart from fuel. But there are women apart from men, and men apart from women, and for this reason your illustration is not right. Since your example does not succeed, fire does not contact fuel.

Question: Fire and fuel are interdependent yet existent. Fire exists on account of fuel, and fuel exists on account of fire. The two dharmas are established interdependently.

Reply:

10v8 If fire exists because of fuel
And fuel exists because of fire,
Then what fixed dharma pre-existed
That there should be fire and fuel?

10/8 If fire is established because of fuel, then fuel too should be established on account of fire. In this case, if a fixed (entity) of fuel existed first, then fire would be established on account of the fuel. If a fixed (entity) 'fire' existed first then fuel would be established on account of the fire. Now, if fire is established on account of fuel, this means that first there is fuel, and subsequently there is fire, but then the fuel must have existed independently of the fire. Why? Because the fuel came first, and the fire afterwards. If the fire was not burning the fuel, then the fuel would not be established (as fuel). The same goes for fuel, since it is not found anywhere apart from with fire. If fuel is not established then neither is fire. If (you say that) fire comes first and the fuel exists afterwards, then there is the same error as with fire. Therefore, neither fire nor fuel is established.

Further:

10v9 If fire exists on account of fuel,
Then fire already established is established again.
If it were in the fuel
It would be non-existent fire.

10/9 If you want to say that fire is established on account of fuel, then an already-established fire is being established again, and why? Fire abides as itself in fire. If you say that fire is not self-subsistent, but is established from fuel, no such thing exists. Therefore, if fire is established from fuel, then the fire, having been established, would be again established, and there errors like this. Moreover, there is the error of fuel which exists while fire does not exist. Why is this? Because fuel would be self-subsistent and separate

from fire. Therefore, it is not the case that fuel and fire are mutually interdependent.

Further:

10v10 When a dharma is established by dependence,
This dharma in return establishes dependence
Now, where there is no dependence,
There will be no dharmas established either.

10/10 When a dharma is established through dependence, this dharma in return establishes the original (dharma) on which it depends. Thus, these are not two fixed entities. It is like fire being established on account of fuel, while in return the fuel is established on account of the fire. Thus these two entities are not fixed, and because they are not fixed they are untenable, and why?

10v11 If dharmas are dependently established,
When non-yet established, how can they depend?
If established, they are already dependent;
Being already established, what use have they for dependence?

10/11 If dharmas are established by means of dependence, such dharmas are initially not yet established, and being not yet established do not exist. When they are non-existent, how can there be dependence? If such dharmas have already been established previously, then being already established, what need do they have for dependence? Neither is (in need) of mutual dependence. Therefore it is not the case that, as you said earlier, fuel and fire are established through mutual interdependence.

Therefore:

10v12 Fire does not exist through dependence on fuel,
Nor does fire exist independently of fuel
Fuel does not exist through dependence on fire
Nor does fuel exist independently of fire.

10/12 Now, fire is not established by dependence on fuel, nor is it established by non-dependence on fuel. It is the same with fuel, whether (one says it is) dependent on fire or independent of fire, in neither way can it be established. This error has already been discussed.

Further:

10v13 Fire does not come from some other place,
And there is no fire in the place occupied by fire.
The same applies to fuel,
And the rest is as explained in 'going and coming'.[163]

10/13 Fire does not come from some other quarter and enter the fuel, but there is no fire in the fuel either, for if you cut up the firewood and look for fire you will not be able to find it. It is the same with fuel. It does not come from some other place and enter into fire, but there is no fuel in fire either. The already-burnt does not burn, the not-yet burnt does not burn and in the moment of burning, there is no burning. Such ideas have been discussed in the chapter on going and coming.

Therefore:

10v14 Fuel is not the same as fire,
But apart from fuel there is no fire
Fire is not the same as fuel,
Within fire there is no fuel,
And within fuel there is no fire.[164]

10/14 Fuel is not the same as fire, and why? Because of the error previously discussed (of saying) that doer and deed are one. There is no fire apart from fuel, because of the error of 'permanently existing fire' and so forth. Fire does not contain fuel, there is no fuel in fire, and there is no fire in fuel. Since these would involve the error of (fuel and fire being) different entities, none of the three can be established.

Question: Why are you discussing fuel and fire?
Reply: In the same way that fire depends for its existence on fuel, so the recipient depends for his existence on receiving. 'Receiving' stands for the five skandhas, 'the recipient' means the person. Since fuel and fire are not established, receiving and recipient also are not established (as existent) and why?

10v15 By means of the dharmas of fire and fuel,
We may explain the dharmas of receiving and recipient.
And we explain pots and cloth,
And all the various dharmas.

10/15 Just as fuel is not fire, so receiving is not the recipient, because of the error of deed and doer being one. But also, there is no recipient without receiving, because no difference can be found, (between them). Because of the error of 'difference', none of the three is established.

Just as with receiving and the recipient, so it is with all the external dharmas such as cloth, pots, and all the various dharmas, which are to be explained in the same way as above, as non-arising and utterly empty.
Therefore:

10v16 If a person says that he has a self
And that all the dharmas each have different characteristics,
You will know that such a man
Has not acquired the flavour of the Buddha-dharma.

10/16 All dharmas from the beginning have been non-arising, having the characteristic of utter nirvana. This is why he utters this verse at the end of the chapter. If a person asserts that there is a characteristic of 'self' as the Vātsīputrīya[165] school teaches, he cannot say that form is the self, and he cannot say that there is a self apart from form, but only that self resides in the 'fifth indescribable storehouse'. This is like the Sarvāstivādins[166] who teach that each of the dharmas has its own characteristics, distinguishing this one as skilful, this one as unskilful, this as neutral, this as outflowing or not outflowing, active or inactive, and so on. Such people as these do not attain the nirvana-quality of dharmas, but fabricate various kinds of sophistries, using the Buddha's words.

Chapter 11 Contemplation of Original Limits[167] 8 verses

11/0 Question: The 'Sutra on Limitless Origins'[168] says that beings come and go in birth and death (samsāra) and that its original limits are inconceivable. In that Sutra it states that there are beings and that there is birth-and-death. Why does it make this statement?

Reply:

11v1 The Great Sage has said
That no original limit is conceivable.
Birth and death had no beginning
And likewise will have no end.

11/1 Sages are of three kinds. Firstly there are the non-Buddhist sages with their five supernatural powers, secondly the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, and thirdly the great bodhisattvas who have attained supernatural powers.[169] Because the Buddha is supreme amongst these three kinds we call him 'The Great Sage'. In whatever the Buddha has said there is nothing which is not the truth. Birth and death has no beginning, and why? A beginning or end of birth and death is inconceivable. This is why we say that it has no beginning.

If you say that, even though it has no beginning and end, it must have a middle, this too is wrong, and why?

11v2 If there is no beginning or end
How can there be a middle?
Therefore within this (process)
There is no before, no after, and no simultaneity.[170]

11/2 Beginning exists because of middle and end, and end exists because of beginning and middle. Where there is no beginning and no end, how can there be a middle? Within samsara there is no beginning and no end, hence we say that before, after and simultaneity cannot be. Why is this?

11v3 If we suppose that first there is birth,
And afterwards there is old age and death;[171]
Then there will be birth with no old age and death,
And old age and death with no birth.

11v4 If old age and death come first,
And afterwards there is birth.
Then this constitutes causelessness:
For without birth, there is old age and death.

11/4 If all the beings in samsara were first born, then gradually became old and afterwards died, then in their being born there would be no old age or death. As a dharma, birth should involve old age and death and old age and death should involve birth. Moreover, if there were birth without old age and death this too would be wrong, and so too if there were old age and death not caused by birth. If old age and death came first, and birth afterwards, then old age and death would be uncaused, because birth would only come afterwards. Also, without birth how can there be old age and death? If you say that birth, old age and death coming either before or after each other is untenable, and assert that they are established simultaneously, this is also erroneous, and why?

11v5 Birth and old age and death

Cannot occur simultaneously
For in the moment of birth there would be death,
And both of these would be uncaused.

11/5 To say that birth, old age and death are simultaneous is incorrect, and why? Because there would be death in the moment of birth, and dharmas ought to exist at the moment of birth and not exist at the moment of death. For there to be death in the moment of birth, is not correct. If they arose simultaneously they would be independent of each other, just as an ox's horns growing simultaneously are independent of each other.

Therefore:

11v6 If you admit that beginning, end and simultaneity
Are all incorrect
Why do you (pursue) sophistries
And say that there is birth, old age and death?

11/6 On investigation of birth, old age and death, all three (interpretations) are found to be erroneous; they are simply non-arising and utterly empty. Why do you tenaciously cling to vain arguments about birth, old age and death, claiming that they have fixed, definite characteristics?

Further:

11v7 Every cause and effect which exists,
Marks and marked dharmas
Receiving and recipient etc.,
All existing dharmas ...

11v8 Not only does birth and death

Have no conceivable original limits -

All dharmas are like this.

No original limits exist at all.

11/8 'All dharmas' refers to cause and effect, marks and what is marked, receiving, recipient and so on. All are without original limits. It is not only birth and death that has no ultimate limits, but in order to summarize all the details he talks only about birth and death having no original limits.

Chapter 12 Contemplation of Suffering[172] 10 verses

12/0 Some people say:

12v1 'Self-created, created by another
Jointly created, or created by no cause'.
In these ways they describe suffering
But in fact these are wrong.

12/1 Some people say that suffering is self-created, or that it is created by something else, or that it is created by both self and other, or that it is created by no cause, but in fact none of these is the case. None of these being the case (means that) sentient beings bring about suffering through causality, and disliking pain, desire to extinguish it. Being ignorant of the true causes and conditions of suffering, they have these four kinds of mistaken ideas. Thus he says that in fact they are all wrong, and why?

12v2 If suffering were self-created
Then it would not arise from conditions.
(But) it is on account of 'these skandhas'[173]
That 'those skandhas' arise.

12/2 If suffering is self-created, then it does not arise from conditions. 'Self (-created)' means to arise from its own nature, but this is not correct. Why is this? It is because of the previous five skandhas that the subsequent five skandhas arise, and therefore suffering cannot be self-created.

Question: If you say 'these skandhas create those skandhas', this is creation by another.

Reply: This is not the case, and why?

12v3 If you say that these five skandhas
Differ from those five skandhas
Then surely you are saying that
Suffering is created by another?

12/3 If these five skandhas are different from those five skandhas, and those five skandhas are different from these five skandhas, then (you say that) this must be 'creation by another'. But by way of example, if thread were different from cloth, then there ought to be cloth apart from thread, but as there is no cloth apart from thread, then cloth is not different from thread. In the same way if those five skandhas differ from these five skandhas, then those five skandhas ought to exist apart from these five skandhas, and if those five skandhas do not exist apart from these five skandhas, then these five skandhas are not different from those five skandhas. Consequently, you should not say that suffering is 'creation by another'.

Question: 'Self creation' means that everybody creats of himself his own suffering and of himself receives his suffering.

Reply:

12v4 If the person himself creates suffering -
What person is there apart from suffering?
That you could say of that person,
'He is able to create his own suffering'?

12/4 You may say that the person himself creates his own suffering, but in what other situation, apart from in the suffering of the five skandhas, do you find a person who could create his own suffering? You should give an account of such a person, but you cannot give an account of him. Therefore, suffering is

not self-created by the person.

If you say that, although a person does not self-create his own suffering, another person creates the suffering and transfers it to this person, this also is incorrect, and why?

12v5 If suffering is created by another person
And yet is transferred to this person,
Then, if he is separate from the suffering
How can this person receive it?

12/5 If another person creates the suffering and transfers it to this person, there can be no reception by this person apart from the five skandhas.

Further:

12v6 If that person creates suffering,
And bestows it on this person,
What person could exist, apart from suffering
Who could give it to this person?

12/6 Suppose you say that that person creates suffering and gives it to this person; what person is there apart from the suffering of the five skandhas, to create suffering and give it to this person? If such a one exists you should describe his characteristics.

Further:

12v7 If self-creation is not established
How can there be creation of suffering by another?
If another person creates suffering
Then this is also termed 'self-creation'.

12/7 Neither other nor self-creation of suffering can be established for various reasons, yet you say that suffering is created by another. This too is incorrect, and why? Because 'this' and 'that' are mutually dependent. If that (person) creates suffering then for that (person) it will constitute self-creation of suffering. Self-creation of suffering has already been refuted, and since you have accepted that self-creation of suffering cannot be established, other-creation cannot be established either.

Moreover:

12v8 Suffering is not termed self-created
Dharmas do not themselves create dharmas
The 'other' has no self-substance.
How can there be an 'other' who creates suffering?

12/8 There is no self-creation of suffering, and why? Just as a knife cannot cut itself, so a dharma cannot create, of itself, a dharma. Therefore, there cannot be self-creation. There is no other-creation of suffering either, and why? There is no own-nature of an 'other' apart from suffering. If there were another own-nature, we would have to say that this other created suffering, but this other is itself also suffering, and how can suffering itself create suffering?

Question: Even if there is neither self-creation nor other-creation, surely there is 'joint creation'?

Reply:

12v9 'if the suffering of this (person) and that (person) is established,
Then surely there is joint creation of suffering'?
But this and that person do not create,

How much less is there creation without a cause.

12/9 Even self-creation and creation by another are erroneous. How much more so creation with no cause? Causelessness involves numerous errors, as has already been explained in the chapter refuting the deed and the doer (chapter 8).

Furthermore:

12v10 It is not only in the explanation of suffering
That these four ways of thinking cannot be established,
But also in regard to all external things
These four ideas cannot be established.

12/10 Although it is stated in the Buddha's teaching that the five receptive[174] skandhas constitute suffering, there are non-Buddhists who say that suffering is the reception of suffering. For this reason he says that it is not only in the explanation of suffering that the four kinds of ideas cannot be established, but they cannot be established for any external objects including earth, water, mountains, trees and so on or any of the dharmas.

Chapter 13 Contemplation of predispositions[175] 9 verses

Question:

13v1 As is taught in the Buddhist sutras,
False deceptions have the mark of misapprehension.
All predispositions and misapprehensions
And therefore they are called deceptions.

13/1 In the Buddhist sutras it says that false deceptions[176] are characterised by missapprehension,[177] but the supreme reality which is called nirvana is not characterised by missapprehension. Because of what these sutras say, we should know that all predispositions are false deceptions and characterised by misapprehension.

Reply:

13v2 False deception and misapprehension;
What is apprehended in these?
The Buddha has spoken thus
In order to point to the meaning of emptiness.

13/2 If dharmas characterised by misapprehension are false deceptions, what is considered to be apprehended in the predispositions? When the Buddha speaks thus we should know that he is explaining the meaning of emptiness.

(17b6) Question: How do you know that the predispositions are empty? Reply: Because all predispositions have the characteristic of falsity. The predispositions arise and cease without abiding; they have no self-nature and are therefore empty. 'Predispositions' means the five skandhas. Since they arise from predispositions, the five skandhas are called predispositions. These five skandhas are all false and unreal and have no fixed

nature, and why?

(17b10) For example; the form[178] one has when an infant is not the form one has when crawling. The form one has when crawling is not the form one has when a toddler. One's form as a toddler is not the form one has as a boy. The form one has as a boy is not the form one has in manhood, and the form one has in manhood is not the form one has in old age. Thus form does not abide even momentarily, so that to distinguish any fixed nature in it is impossible. Either the infant's form is the same as the crawler's form and so on up to the form in old age, or they are different, but both (these ideas) are wrong, and why?

(17b15) Suppose that the infant's form were the same as the crawler's form, and so on up to the form in old age. If this were so, there would be only one form, that of the infant, and there would be no crawler and so on up to old age. Or again, it is like a lump of clay which is always a lump of clay and never becomes a pot. Why is this? Because a form is always fixed. If the form of an infant differs from that of a crawler, then an infant will not become a crawler, and a crawler will not become an infant, and why? Because the two forms are different. If things were thus, the forms of boyhood, youth, manhood and old age would not succeed each other, and there would be loss of any family structure, with no fathers and no sons. If things were thus, there would only be an infant, who would have to become a father - the other stages from crawling to old age would play no part. Therefore, both are erroneous.

(17b23) Question: Even though form is not fixed, when the infant's form has ceased, it arises in a succession (of forms) up to the

form of old age. This does not involve the kind of errors discussed above.

(17b25) Reply: If the infant's form is successively reproduced, then either it is successively reproduced after having ceased (at each juncture) or it is successively reproduced without having ceased. If the infant's form has ceased, how can there be any successive reproduction, since there would be no cause? Even though, for example, there is firewood which could burn, there is no successive production (of fire) after the fire has gone out. If we suppose that there is successive reproduction of the childhood form without it having ceased, then the childhood form, since it never ceases, will surely continue with its original characteristics and there will be no successive reproduction here either.

(17c1) Question: We are not saying that there is successive reproduction because (the form) has ceased or not ceased. We are merely saying that because non-abiding characteristics seem to arise, we can speak of successive reproduction.

Reply: If this were so, it would be a fixed form arising again, and in that case there ought to be a thousand myriad kinds of form, but this is not so. In that case too, there should be no succession. Thus, though we may search everywhere for form, it has no fixed characteristics. It exists only through conventional expressions. It is like the banana tree - you can search for its core[179] but you will not be able to find it, for it is merely bark and leaves. In such a way does the man of insight seek the characteristics of form. Ceasing moment by moment and utterly without reality, form is unattainable. The shape and characteristics of non-abiding form, seeming to arise

consecutively are hard to distinguish, just as it is impossible to distinguish fixed forms in the flames of a lamp. It is impossible for there to be forms arising from such fixed forms (as you describe), therefore form has no nature and is empty, existing only through conventional expressions.

(17c11) Receiving[180] is also like this. The wise man investigates it in various ways but since (receptions) are sequential and similar, it is difficult to distinguish their arising and ceasing; they are like the succession of flowing water.

It is only because we have ~~learned~~ perceived[181] it that we say there are three receivings[182] within the body. Therefore, you should know that receiving may be explained in the same way as form.

(17c13) (The skandha of) conception[183] arises on account of names and marks, and without such names and marks it would not arise. Therefore the Buddha says that discriminative knowledge of names and terms is called conception. It is not fixed and pre-existent, but arises from conditions and has no fixed nature. Having no fixed nature, it resembles 'the shadow following the substance'.[184] The shadow is there because of the substance. Without the substance there is no shadow, and the shadow has no fixed nature. If it did have a fixed existence, then the shadow would exist without the substance, but in reality this does not happen. Therefore it arises from conditions, has no own-nature and is unattainable. Conception too, is like this. It only exists because of external designations and through conventional worldly expressions.

(17c20) (The skandha of) consciousness[185] arises because of form, sound, smell, taste, touch, etc., and eyes, ears, nose, mouth and body etc.[186] Because the functions of eye, etc., are differentiated, consciousness is differentiated. This consciousness must be either in the form, or in the eye, or between them. It has no fixed nature, and only after it has arisen is there consciousness of the material world, consciousness of this person and consciousness of that person. The consciousness which cognizes a particular person is either the same as the consciousness which cognizes another person, or it is different. These two may be hard to distinguish, just as eye-consciousness may be difficult to distinguish from ear-consciousness. Since they are hard to distinguish, we can either say that they are one, or that they are different. They are not fixed and differentiated, because they merely arise from conditions. Such distinctions as eye (consciousness), etc., are therefore empty and have no own-nature.

(17c27) It is like an entertainer who puts a pearl in his mouth, then having taken it out, shows it to the people who begin to doubt whether it is the original pearl, or some other different one. Consciousness is also like this, for having arisen, it arises again. Is it the original consciousness, or is it a different consciousness? Therefore you should know that consciousness, being non-abiding, has no own-nature and is false and deceptive, like an illusion.

(18a2) Predispositions[187] are also like this. Predispositions are those of body, speech and mind, and are of two kinds, pure and impure. Which are impure? The grasping attachment which afflicts beings

is called impure. True speech, non-attachment etc. which do not afflict beings are called pure. These (two) either increase, or diminish.

(18a5) Those with pure predispositions, since they have already received their rewards either as humans, or in the heavens of desire, or in the heavens of form or the formless heaven,[188] are 'diminishing', but now in resuming their activities they are called 'increasing'. Those with impure predispositions are also like this. Having already received their deserts in the hells, in animal births, and amongst the hungry ghosts and asuras[189] they are 'diminishing', but in resuming their activities they are called 'increasing'. Therefore, since all predispositions are increasing and decreasing they never abide. It is like a man who is ill. If he is given suitable treatment his illness will subside, but if it is unsuitable his illness will get worse. Predispositions are like this. Because they increase and diminish they are not fixed, but exist only through conventional worldly expressions. It is by means of the worldly truth that we manage to perceive the supreme truth.[190]

(18a12) It is said that ignorance causes predispositions, because of predispositions there is consciousness and attachment, because of consciousness and attachment, there is name and form, from name and form derive the six avenues, from the six avenues there is contact, from contact there is reception, from reception there is desire, from desire there is grasping, from grasping there is existence, from existence there is birth and from birth there is old age and death, sorrow, grief, suffering affliction, the pain of separation from those you love, and the pain of association with those you hate, and so on. In

this way all sufferings have their origin in predispositions.[191] The Buddha's teachings rely on conventional worldly truth, (but) if you attain to the truth of the supreme meaning and develop true insight (prajna) then ignorance will cease. When ignorance ceases the predispositions do not accumulate, and because the predispositions do not originate, that which the perception of truth[192] cuts off, the view of the body (as the self) and doubts, rituals and attachments and so on are all cut off.

(18a19) In addition, that which meditation[193] cuts off, namely attachment and craving, anger, contamination by forms, contamination by non-form, lust and ignorance are also cut off. Because these are cut off, each link (of causation) ceases, which is to say that ignorance, pre-dispositions, consciousness, name and form, the six avenues, contact, reception, desire, grasping, existence, birth, old age, death, sorrow, grief, suffering, affliction, the pain of separation from those you love, and pain of associating with those you hate, and so forth, all cease. Because of this cessation the five skandhas completely cease, with nothing at all remaining, only emptiness.

(18a24) This is why the Buddha, wishing to point to the meaning of emptiness, taught that all predispositions are false deceptions. Furthermore, all dharmas, since they are without (own) nature, are false deceptions. Being false and deceptive, they are empty. As the verse says:

13v3 Since all dharmas vary[194]
We know that they have no nature.
Dharmas without a nature do not exist

Because all dharmas are empty.

13/3 Dharmas have no nature, and why? Though dharmas arise, they do not abide in an own-nature, and hence they have no nature. It is as if an infant had a fixed, abiding own-nature. He could never become a crawler, and so on up to old age. Yet an infant, through consecutive phases, does have different characteristics manifesting as crawling and so on up to old age. This is why we say that, since we see dharmas having varying characteristics we know that they have no nature.

(18b4) Question: Even if dharmas have varying characteristics and no nature, what is wrong in saying that dharmas with no nature exist?

Reply: If they have no nature, how can they be dharmas, how can they have characteristics? Why is this? Because they have no basis. It is solely in order to refute their (presumed) nature that we say they have no nature. If dharmas which had no nature existed, we would not describe all dharmas as empty. If all dharmas are empty, how can dharmas with no nature exist?

Question:

13v4 If dharmas have no nature
How can you say that from infancy
To old age and so on
Various differences exist?

13/4 If dharmas had no nature, then they would not have varying characteristics, yet you say that they do have varying characteristics. Therefore dharmas do have a nature. If there were no dharma-natures, how could there be varying characteristics?

Reply:

13v5 If dharmas had a nature
How could they vary?
If dharmas had no nature
How could they vary?

13/5 If dharmas had a fixed and definite nature, how could they possibly vary? 'Nature' means a fixed, settled existence which cannot be transformed, just as true gold cannot be transformed, or the nature of darkness cannot be changed into light, and the nature of light cannot be changed into darkness.

Moreover:

13v6 A particular dharma does not vary,
A different dharma does not vary.
Just as youth does not become old age
And old age does not become youth.[195]

13/6 If a dharma did vary it ought to have varying characteristics. Either it is the same dharma which varies, or it is a different dharma which varies, but neither of these is correct. If it was the same dharma which varied, then old age ought to become old age, but in reality old age does not become old age. If it is a different dharma that is the variant, then, old age being different from youth, youth should become old age, but in reality youth does not become old age. Both are wrong.

Question: What is wrong in saying that the same dharma varies? We see with our own eyes that youth, with the passing of the seasons and the years, becomes old age.

Reply:

13v7 If a dharma is the same as its variant,
Then milk should itself be cream.

What dharma is there apart from milk
That can produce the cream?

13/7 If a dharma were the same as its varient, then milk itself ought to be cream, and would need no causes or conditions at all, but this is not correct, and why? Because milk differs from cream in various ways. Milk itself is not cream, and therefore dharmas are not their own variants. If you say that it is a different dharma which varies, this too is incorrect, for apart from milk, what other thing could be considered as cream? Looked at in this way, a dharma does not vary itself, but it is not a different dharma that varies either. Therefore you should not cling to a one-sided position.

Question: Destroying both 'itself' and 'different' dharmas, you seem to be abiding in emptiness. Emptiness is itself a doctrine.[196]

Reply:

13v8 If dharmas which are not empty exist
Then empty dharmas should exist
But in reality non-empty dharmas do not exist
How can there be empty dharmas?

13/8 If non-empty dharmas existed, then empty dharmas should exist interdependently with them. But in what has gone before we have refuted non-empty dharmas with various types of reasonings. Since no dharmas exist which are non-empty, there is no reciprocal dependence, and since there is no reciprocal dependence, how can empty dharmas exist?

(18c11) Question: You say that because no non-empty dharmas exist, empty dharmas do not exist either. If so, this is a doctrine

of emptiness.[197] But since there is no reciprocal dependence there should not be any clinging (to a position). If there are opposites, there must be interdependence. If there are no opposites, then there will be no interdependence. If there is no interdependence there will be no characteristics, and if there are no characteristics there will be no clinging (to a position). It is in this way that we regard your doctrine of emptiness.

Reply:

13v9 The Great Sage speaks of the emptiness of dharmas
In order to wean us from all views.
If you then reinstate a view of 'emptiness',
You cannot be taught by all the Buddhas.

13/9 It was in order to destroy the sixty-two views,[198] as well as ignorance, craving etc., and all the afflictions, that the Buddha spoke of emptiness. If a person produces further views about emptiness, such a person is incorrigible. As an example, a sick man has to take medicine to be healed. If the medicine makes him ill again he cannot get better. Or it is like a flame coming out of firewood which can be extinguished by water. If it had been produced by water, what could one use to extinguish it? In the same way emptiness is the water which can extinguish the fires of affliction. There are some people who, because they carry a heavy load of karma, have a mind steeped in craving and attachment and are dull in insight, produce views of emptiness. They either say that there is emptiness, or that there is not emptiness, and through (these ideas) they again generate afflictions. If one (tries to) instruct this kind of person in emptiness, he will say 'I have known this emptiness for a long time'. But without this emptiness there is no way

to nirvana, for as the sutra says, 'Unless you pass through the gate of emptiness, marklessness and non-doing, your liberation will be nothing but words'.

Chapter 14 Contemplation of Combination[199] 8 verses

14/0 The proponent says: In the earlier chapter (Ch 3) refuting the sense-functions, we explained that seeing, what is seen, and the seer cannot be established. Since these three things are not different dharmas, they do not combine, and the meaning of no-combining will now be explained.

Question: Why is there no comination of the three elements of eye etc?

Reply:

14v1 Seeing, what is seen and the seer;
Each of these three has a different realm,[200]
The three dharmas being thus different
They will never for a moment combine.

14/1 'Seeing' is the function of the eye, 'what is seen' is the material form, and 'the seer' is the self. Each of these three things occupies a different place and there will never be a time when they combine. 'Different place' means that the eye is inside the body, and forms are outside the body, while the self may be said to be either inside the body or to be everywhere and in all places. This is why there is no combination.

(19a8) Furthermore, if you say that a dharma of seeing exists, it must be either seeing involving combination, or seeing not involving combination, but both of these are wrong, and why? If it is seeing with combination, then according to where the object is, the sense-function and self should be there as well, but this is not the case, and consequently there is no combination. If it is seeing with no combination, then there would have to

be seeing with sense-function, the self and the object each occupying different places, but then there would be no seeing, and why? Because if, for example, the eye-function is here, it cannot see a jug in a distant place. Consequently in neither case is there seeing.

(19a13) Question: Through the combination of four things; self, mind, sense-function and object, knowing is produced. We do have the ability to know the myriad objects such as pots, clothes etc., and therefore there must be seeing, what is seen and the seer.

(19a15) Reply: These matters have already been refuted in the chapter on the sense-functions, but we will now explain them once again. You say that four things combine to produce knowing. This knowing is either produced after seeing objects such as pots, clothes, etc., or it arises before seeing them. If it arises after having seen them, such knowing is useless. If it arises before seeing them, it would be before any combination, so how would knowing have been produced? If you say that the four things combine simultaneously to produce knowing this also is incorrect. If they arose simultaneously there would be no interdependence and why? First the pot exists, then you see it, and then afterwards knowledge arises. In simultaneity there is no before or after.

Since knowing does not exist, seeing, what is seen and the seer likewise do not exist. In the same way all dharmas are like an illusion, like a dream, without fixed characteristics. How could they combine? And since they do not combine, they are empty.

Further:

14v2 Passion, and the object of passion
And the impassioned one are also thus.
The other avenues, the other afflictions
Are also all like this.

14/2 In the same way that seeing, what is seen and the seer are not combined, so passion, the object of passion and the impassioned one also should not combine. And what is said of the three dharmas of seeing, what is seen, and the seer, may also be said of hearing, what is heard and the hearer, and the remaining avenues. What is said of passion, the object of passion and the impassioned one, may also be said of hate, the object of hate, and the hater, and the remaining afflictions, etc.

Further:

14v3 Different dharmas should combine
But seeing, etc., are not different
Since their characteristics have not been established as different,
How can seeing, (and seer) etc., combine?

14/3 Ordinary things combine by virtue of being different, but no difference in characteristics can be found in seeing, (seer) etc., and consequently there is no combination.

Further:

14v4 Not only in the dharmas of seeing, etc.
Can no difference in characteristics be found
But all dharmas which exist
Are also without different characteristics.

14/4 Not only can we find no difference in characteristics among the three elements of seeing, what is seen, and the seer, but all

dharmas are without such different characteristics.

Question: Why do they not have different characteristics?

Reply:

14v5 Difference is difference because of difference,[201]
Difference without difference is not difference.
If a dharma issues from a cause
That dharma does not differ from its cause.

14/5 The difference of which you speak is a difference which is called difference on account of it being a different dharma. Unless there are different dharmas we cannot regard things as different, and why? If a dharma is produced from conditions, that dharma is not different from its cause. When the cause is destroyed, the effect is also destroyed. For example, a house exists because of its beams and rafters. The house is not different from the beams and rafters, so that for the beams and rafters to decay is for the house, too to decay.

Question: What is wrong in saying that there are fixed, different dharmas?

Reply:

14v6 If a 'difference' means a separate thing arising from something different,
Then it should be different from that other different thing.
There are no 'different' things which arise separated from different things.
Therefore there is no 'difference'.

14/6 If there were (genuinely) different dharmas, separate and arising from other different (dharmas), then these different dharmas would be separate from those other different (dharmas). But in reality there are no (genuinely) different dharmas,

separate and arising from different dharmas, consequently those other different dharmas do not exist. It is as if the fist were different and separate from a different (entity) of five fingers. If the fist were different, it should be (equally) different to different things such as pots, etc. Now, one cannot find a different fist, quite separate from a different (entity of) five fingers. Therefore there is no different dharma of a fist which is different to pots, etc.

(19b22) Question: Our sutras say that different characteristics do not arise from conditions. Different characteristics result from our making distinctions within the universal characteristic,[202] and it is because of these different characteristics that there are different dharmas.

Reply:

14v7 Within difference there are no different characteristics.
Nor are there any within non-difference.
Since there are no different characteristics
There is no difference between this and that.

14/7 You say that different characteristics are a result of making distinctions within a universal characteristic, and that because of these different characteristics there are different dharmas. If this were so, these different characteristics would arise from conditions, and this being the case they would be described as (causally) conditioned dharmas. Since these different characteristics cannot be found apart from different dharmas, the different characteristics merely exist because of different dharmas, for they cannot be established in isolation. But, there are no different characteristics within different dharmas, and why? If the different dharmas are already in

existence, what use have they for different characteristics? Neither are these different characteristics in dharmas which are non-different, and why? Because if the different characteristics were in dharmas which were not different, they would not be called non-different dharmas. Since they do not exist in either situation, there are no different characteristics, and since there are no different characteristics there is no 'this dharma' and 'that dharma'.

Moreover, since there are no different dharmas, there is also no combination.

14v8 A dharma does not combine with itself.
Different dharmas do not combine either.
Combiner, moment of combining
And dharma of combining; none of these exists.

14/8 A dharma does not combine with its own substance, because it is one, just as one finger does not combine with itself. Different dharmas also do not combine because they are different, and different things already established do not need to combine. Contemplated thus, a dharma of combination is untenable, and this is why we say that a combiner, a moment of combining and a dharma of combining are all untenable.

Chapter 15 Contemplation of Existence and Nonexistence

11 verses

15/0 Question: Every dharma has a nature, because it has a function.[203] For example, a pot has the nature of a pot, and cloth has the nature of cloth. This nature emerges when there is a combination of conditions.

Reply:

15v1 That a nature exists within conditions
Is not correct.
And a nature issuing from conditions
Would be termed a 'created dharma'.[204]

15/1 If dharmas have natures, they should not issue from conditions, and why? Because if they issue from conditions they are 'created' dharmas and have no fixed nature.

Question: What is wrong in saying that a dharma's nature is created from conditions?

Reply:

15v2 Suppose its nature were created;
But what would be the meaning of this?
'Nature' means something uncreated
Established without reliance on other dharmas.[205]

15/2 Just as gold mixed with copper is not true gold, so if a nature exists then it has no need of conditions. If it issues from conditions we will know that it is not a true nature. Also, if a nature is fixed, then it should not emerge in reliance upon anything else. It is not like length and shortness, or this and that, which, having no fixed natures, rely upon other things for their existence.

Question: If dharmas have no self-nature, they must have other-nature.

Reply:

15v3 If a dharma has no self-nature
How can it have other-nature?
Self-nature, in relation to other-nature
Is also called other-nature.

15/3 Since a dharma's nature is created by conditions and established by causal dependence, it is not self-nature. This being the case, other-nature, since it is self-nature in relation to an other-nature and is also produced interdependently from conditions, does not exist either. Since it does not exist, how can you say that dharmas are produced from an other-nature, since that other-nature is also a self-nature?

Question: What is wrong in saying that dharmas exist without either a self-nature or an other-nature?

Reply:

15v4 Without self-nature or other-nature
How could there be any dharmas at all?
If there is self or other-nature
Dharmas can be established.

15/4 You speak of dharmas existing without either self-nature or other-nature, but this is not correct. Without self-nature and other-nature there will be no dharmas, and why? It is through the existence of self-nature and other-nature that dharmas are established. For instance, where the substance of a pot is a self-nature, cloth* is an other-nature.

Question: If you refute existence in terms of self-nature and

* scribe or writer's error for 衣 cf. p.19a13

other-nature, then there must be nonexistence.

Reply:

15v5 If existence is not established,
How can nonexistence be established?
It is because there are existent dharmas
That when existents are destroyed, they are called 'nonexistent'.

15/5 If you have already accepted that existence is not established, then you should accept that nonexistence does not exist either, and why? When existent dharmas are destroyed they are called nonexistent. This nonexistence exists because of the destruction of existence.

Further:

15v6 If a person sees existence and nonexistence,
And sees self-nature and other-nature,
(Seeing) thus he does not see
The true meaning of the Buddha-dharma.

15/6 If a person is deeply attached to dharmas, then he will inevitably pursue a view of existence. If you refute self-nature then he will see other-nature. If you refute other-nature he will see existence. If you refute existence, he will see nonexistence. If you refute nonexistence, he will become confused. But if he is clear-witted and his mental attachments are slight, and he knows the calm serenity of the cessation of all views,[206] he will nevermore generate these four kinds of sophistries. Such a person sees the Buddha-dharma, and this is why the above verse says so.

Further:

15v7 The Buddha is able to extinguish both existence and nonexistence
As it says in the sutra,
In the 'Instruction to Kātyāyana'

"Separate from existence and separate from nonexistence".

15/7 In the Samda-Kātyāyana sutra,[207] the Buddha expounds the meaning of 'right view' as 'separate from existence and separate from nonexistence'. If there were the least fixed 'existence' in dharmas, the Buddha would not have refuted both existence and nonexistence. When existence is refuted, people say that this constitutes nonexistence, but because the Buddha is thoroughly versed in the characteristics of dharmas, he explains that neither is the case. You should therefore relinquish views of existence and of nonexistence.

Further:

15v8 If dharmas really have a nature
They cannot subsequently change.
For a nature to have varying characteristics
Would never be the case.

15/8 If dharmas have a fixed existent nature this should under no circumstances change, and why? If it is a fixed, existent self-nature, then it should not have varying characteristics, just as in the 'true gold' example above (15/2). Now, since dharmas are manifestly seen to have varying characteristics, we must know that they do not have fixed characteristics.

Further:

15v9 If dharmas really had a nature
How could they vary?
If dharmas really had no nature
How could they vary?

15/9 If dharmas had a fixed nature, how could they change? If they have no nature then they have no self-substance, so how could

they change?

Further:

15v10 Fixed existence is attachment to permanence.
Fixed nonexistence is attachment to severance.
Therefore the wise man
Should not be attached to either existence or nonexistence.

15/10 If dharmas were fixed and existent, having the mark of existence,[208] then they would never become nonexistent, with the mark of nonexistence, and this would be permanence. Why is this? It is like saying, of the three periods of time, that the characteristics of a dharma exist in the future period, and that this dharma comes into present existence, and then in turn passes into the past, without abandoning its original characteristics. This would constitute permanence. It is also saying that an effect exists beforehand in the cause, which is also permanence.

(20b22) If you say that a fixed (entity) is nonexistent, then this nonexistent thing must have existed previously but does not exist now, and this constitutes severance. Severance means no continuity of characteristics. Through these two views, one strays very far from the Buddha's Dharma.

Question: Why does (a view of) existence produce the view that things are permanent, and a (view of) nonexistence produce the view that things are cut off?

Reply:

15v11 If dharmas had fixed natures
They would not be nonexistent, and this would be permanence.

If they previously existed and now do not,
This would constitute severance.

15/11 If dharmas' nature were fixed and existent, they would have the characteristic of existence and not the characteristic of non-existence, so they would in no way be nonexistent. If they were nonexistent, they would not exist, and consequently they would not be dharmas. Because of the errors previously discussed, one thus falls into a view of permanence.

(20c1) If a dharma which formerly existed is destroyed and becomes nonexistent, then this constitutes severance, and why? Because existence cannot be nonexistence, and because, as you say, existence and nonexistence each have fixed characteristics. If you have views of severance or permanence, sin and merit, etc. will not exist and you will negate all worldly processes. For this reason, you should relinquish them.

Chapter 16 Contemplation of Bondage and Liberation[209]

10 verses

16/0 Birth and death (samsara) is not entirely without foundation. Within it there are surely living beings transmigrating (Lit: going and coming),[210] or predispositions transmigrating. What are your reasons for saying that living being and predispositions are absolutely empty, and that there is no transmigration?

Reply:

16v1 As for the predispositions transmigrating,
If they are permanent they should not transmigrate.
Nor should they if impermanent.
It is the same too, with living beings.

16/1 If predispositions transmigrate within the six paths of samsara, do they transmigrate with permanent characteristics, or do they transmigrate with impermanent characteristics? Both are wrong. If they transmigrate with permanent characteristics, then there will be no continuity of characteristics through births and deaths, because they will be fixed, and because their self-nature will persist. If they transmigrate with impermanent characteristics, then, too, there will be no continuity of characteristics through transmigration and birth and death, since they will not be fixed, and will have no self-nature. In the case of living beings transmigrating, the same errors will apply.
Further:

16v2 If living beings transmigrate

Within the skandhas, the realms and the avenues,[211]
Seek them five ways;[212] they are utterly nonexistent.
Who is it that transmigrates?

16/2 Birth and death, the skandhas, realms and entrances all mean the same thing. If it is living beings who transmigrate within these skandhas, realms and avenues, we have searched in the chapter on fire and fuel[213] for such living beings in five ways and they are unattainable. Who is it that transmigrates in the skandhas, the realms and the avenues?

Further:

16v3 If something transmigrates from a body to a body,
It will be bodiless.[214]
If it has no body,
Then there will be no transmigration.

16/3 If living beings transmigrate, do they transmigrate with a body, or do they transmigrate without a body? Neither is correct, and why? If there is transmigration with a body, then (the living being) will go from one body to another body, and if so, the transmigrator will not have a body. Moreover, if the body already existed, (the living being) would not have any further need to pass from body to body, but if no body existed beforehand, he would not exist, and being non-existent, how could he transmigrate, be born, or die?

Question: The sutras say that there is nirvana, and the extinction of all suffering. Surely this extinction must be the extinction of the predispositions, or[215] the extinction of living beings?

Reply: Both are incorrect, and why?

16v4 The predispositions becoming extinct?
Such would never be the case.
Living beings becoming extinct?
This too could not be right.

16/4 You say that either the predispositions cease or the living being ceases, but we have already answered these assertions. Predispositions have no nature.[216] Living beings too, you can search for in various ways in samsara and transmigration but you will not be able to find them. Therefore, predispositions do not cease, nor do living beings cease.

Question: If this is true, then there is no bondage, and no liberation, since no foundation can be found for them.

Reply:

16v5 Predispositions have the characteristics of arising and ceasing,
Not bound, and not liberated.
Living beings too, as formerly explained,
Are not bound and not liberated.

16/5 You say that predispositions and living beings have bondage and liberation, but this is not the case. Since predispositions arise and cease instant by instant, they cannot be bound or liberated. It has already been explained that you can search for living beings in five ways but you will not find them. How can they have bondage or liberation?

Further:

16v6 If bondage means the body,
Then having a body is not bondage.[217]
Not having a body also is not bondage,
How then can there be bondage?

16/6 If you say that bondage means (to have) the body of the five skandhas, then if a living being already has the five skandhas, he cannot be bound, and why? Because this would be one person having two bodies. Having no body he cannot be bound either, and why? If he has no body, then he has no five skandhas, and having no five skandhas is emptiness, so how could there be bondage? There is no further third (entity) which could be bound.

Further:

16v7 If bondage preceded the one who is bound,
Then it would bind the one who is bound.
But in reality no pre-existent bondage exists
The other (aspects) may be answered as in 'going and coming'.[218]

16/7 If, as you assert, bondage exists prior to the one who is bound, then it ought to bind the one who is bound, but in reality no prior bondage exists, separate from the one who is bound. Therefore, you cannot say that the living being is in bondage, nor can you say that the living being is the one who is bound and that the five skandhas are the bondage. Nor can you say that, within the five skandhas, the afflictions are the bondage and the remainder, the five skandhas, are what is bound. None of these is correct, and why? If the living being existed separately, prior to the five skandhas, then the living being would be bound by the five skandhas, but in reality there is no separate being apart from the five skandhas. If the afflictions existed separately, apart from the five skandhas, then the five skandhas would be bound by the afflictions, but in reality there are no separate afflictions apart from the five skandhas.

(21b2) Moreover, as is explained in the chapter on going and coming, a past going does not go, a future going does not go, and a moment of going does not go. In the same way a future bondage does not bind, a past bondage does not bind, and a moment of bondage does not bind. There is, moreover, no liberation either, and why?

16v8 One who is bound does not have liberation
One who is unbound also does not have liberation
If there were liberation in the moment of binding,
Bondage and release would be simultaneous.

16/8 One who is bound does not have liberation, and why? Because he is already bound. One who is not bound does not have liberation either, and why? Because he is not bound. And if you say that there is liberation in the moment of bondage, then bondage and liberation would be simultaneous, and this is not right, since bondage and liberation are mutually opposed.

Question: There are people who, cultivating the Way, manifestly enter nirvana and achieve liberation. How can you say that they do not exist?

Reply:

16v9 "If we do not receive dharmas
We will attain nirvana".
Such persons as these
Are themselves the ones in bondage to receiving.[219]

16/9 If a person produces this thought - "I shall free myself from receiving and attain nirvana", this person is the very one who is in bondage to receiving.

Further:

16v10 Nirvana is not something special,
Separate from birth and death.
The meaning of thusness being thus,[220]
How can there be any distinctions?

16/10 In the highest sense of the real character of all dharmas, we do not speak of a special nirvana which exists apart from birth and death. As the sutras say; "nirvana is samsara, samsara is nirvana".[221] Within this true character of all dharmas how can you say 'This is samsara, this is nirvana'?

Chapter 17 Contemplation of Karma[222] 33 verses

Question:

17/0 Although you refute dharmas in various ways, karma does have a fixed existence, since it is able to cause living beings to receive the fruits and rewards (of their actions). As the sutra says, 'all living beings take birth according to their karma'. An evil person goes into the hells, one who cultivates merit is reborn in heaven, and one who traverses the path attains nirvana. Therefore, these dharmas are not empty. It is said of karma that:

17v1 A person can subdue his mind
And benefit living beings.[223]
This is called compassion
The seed and the fruit of the two worlds.

17/1 The three poisons in a person cause distress to others and give rise to actions, so the good person first of all destroys his own evil. This is why it is said that subduing his own mind benefits others. 'Benefiting others' means almsgiving, holding to the precepts, humility, etc. and not harming others. This is what is meant by 'benefiting others'. It is also known as 'compassionate goodness and blessed virtue' and as 'the seeds and joyful fruit of this world and the next'.
Further:

17v2 The great sage expounds two kinds of karma;
The thought, and that which thought produces.[224]
Within these different characteristics of karma
Various distinctions are explained.

17/2 The great sage teaches that karmas are of two kinds. One is thought, the other is that which thought produces. These two kinds of karma are explained in detail in the Abhidharma.

17v3 The thought of which the Buddha speaks
May be termed 'mental karma'.
That which arises from the thought
Is speech and body karma.

17/3 Conception[225] is one of the dharmas of mental configurations.[226] Amongst the mental configurations, it has the capacity to initiate that which is done, and this is why it is called karma. External actions of body and speech arise on account of conception. Although there are things which are done through the other configurations of the mind, it is conception which is the basis of action, and this is why conception is said to be karma. The characteristics of karma will now be explained:

17v4 The karma of body and the karma of speech,
Performed and non-performed karma.[227]
Within these four things
Is both goodness and non-goodness.

17v5 From their effect[228] arises blessed virtue
And evil arises in the same way.
These seven dharmas,[229] including conception,
Comprise the characteristics of karma.

17/5 Speech karma: There are four kinds of speech karma.[230] Bodily karma: There are three kinds of bodily karma. These seven kinds of karma are subdivided into two types, 'active' and 'non-active'. When you act, this is called 'active' karma, but

once you have acted the successive subsequent products are termed 'non-active' karmas. These two types of karma may be both 'good' and 'not good'. 'Not good' means that they do not stop evil. Good means that they stop evil.

(21c20) Furthermore, blessed virtue arises from their enjoyment, as when a benefactor gives something to a recipient. If the recipient receives and enjoys it, the benefactor acquires two kinds of merit, one arising from the giving and the other arising from the enjoyment.

(21c22) It is like a man shooting at another man with an arrow. If the arrow kills the man, there are two kinds of sin involved. One is the sin of shooting at him, the other is the sin arising from the murder. If the shot had not killed him, the one who shot would only have the sin of shooting, and there would be no sin of murder. This is why it says in the verse that sin and merit are produced from the effect.

(22a2) These are what is meant by the six kinds of karma, and the seventh is called conception. These seven kinds of karma are subdivisions of the characteristics of karma, and karma has effects and rewards in this world and subsequent worlds. Therefore there are fixed, real (karmic) actions and their results. Hence, dharmas cannot be empty.

Reply:

17v6 If the action continues up to its reception of reward,[231]
Then such an action is permanent.
If it ceases, how can a nonexistent action

Give rise to a reward?

17/6 If an action continued right up to the reception of its reward, then it would be permanent, but this is not correct, and why? Actions have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. They do not abide even for an instant, so how much less can they persist right up to their reward? But if you say that an action ceases, then, being ceased, it does not exist, so how can it produce its reward?

Question:

17v7 It is like the sprout, etc.,[232] where a succession of characteristics
Arises from the seed,
And from that is produced the fruit.
Without the seed, there would be no succession.

17v8 There is a succession from the seed,
And from this succession comes the fruit.
The seed comes first, and afterwards the fruit.
With no severance, and no permanence.

17v9 And in the same way, from the initial mind[233]
The dharmas of mind have arisen in succession.
And from this mind there are effects
Without that mind, there would be no succession.

17v10 From mind, there is a succession
From this succession comes the effect.
The act comes first, and afterwards the result.
With no severance, and no permanence.

17/10 It is like the sprout coming from the corn-seed and from the

sprout a succession of stalk, leaf, etc., from which succession the fruit is produced. Without the seed there is no successive arising; therefore succession takes place because of and from the corn-seed. From the succession comes the fruit. Since formerly there was the seed, and subsequently there is the fruit, there is neither severance nor permanence.

(22a22) Just as in the example of the corn seed, so it is with action and its effect. The initial thought[234] which gives rise to sin or merit is like the seed of corn. As a result of this thought, the other dharmas of thoughts and mental configurations are produced in succession, up to the reward. Because the action comes first and the effect afterwards, there is no severance and no permanence involved. If there were rewards separate from actions, this would involve severance or permanence. As for the rewards and causes of good actions, it is said:

17v11 Able to establish blessed virtue,
Are the ten Paths of 'white' actions.[235]
The five desires and pleasures of the two worlds
Are the reward of these 'white' actions.

17/11 'White' means good and pure. As for establishing the causes of blessed virtue; following the ten paths of pure actions results in no-killing, no-stealing, no-lewdness, no lying, no deception, no evil speech, no useless gossip, no jealousy, no anger and no perverted views. These are termed good. One who produces such results in body, speech and mind attains name and wealth in this world, and in the next world is born into a place of honour amongst gods and men.[236] Although there are other various types of blessed virtues such as almsgiving and reverence, we are summarising, and these are therefore to be included within the ten good paths.

Reply:

17v12 If one made such distinctions as yours,
The errors would be extremely numerous.
Therefore, what you have said,
Is not correct in its meaning.

17/12 If, in connection with the succession from action to reward, you take as an example the corn-seed, the errors will be extremely numerous, but we shall not discuss them at length here. As for your example of corn-seed, this example will not do, and why? Corn seed is tangible, it has form, can be seen, and has a succession of characteristics, but even so[237] we may contemplate this matter and still not accept your words. How much less with thoughts and actions, which are intangible, formless and invisible? Though they arise and cease without abiding, you desire (to establish) some continuity of characteristics. This is not correct.

(22b13) Further, as for the succession from seed to sprout, etc., is this succession after (the seed) has ceased (at each juncture), or is it a succession in which the seed has not ceased? If it is a succession with the seed having ceased, then this would be causelessness, but if it is succession without the seed having ceased, then corn would be constantly arising from this seed, and if this were so, then one seed of corn would produce all the corn in the world. But this is not the case, and therefore the succession from action to reward is not like this.

Question:

17v13 We will now further expound,
In relation to actions and their rewards,
(Truths) which all Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas

And sages admire and praise.

17/13 Namely:

17v14 The non-disappearing dharma[238] is like a bond,
Actions are like the goods owing.
Its nature is neutral[239]
Its classification is fourfold.[240]

17v15 It is not severed by perception of truths.[241]
It is only severed by meditation.[242]
By virtue of this non-disappearing dharma
All actions have their rewards.

17v16 If it were severed by perception of truths,
Yet actions still reached similar (rewards)[243]
This would mean a denial of karma
And errors such as this.

17v17 When all predispositions and actions
Whether similar or dissimilar
First receive a body in a realm
At that time only one reward arises.[244]

17v18 These two kinds of action[245]
Receive their reward in the present world,
Some say that, having received their reward,
The actions still remain.

17v19 Either they cease at fruition
Or they cease at death

Herein is the distinction

Between those with outflows and those without outflows.[246]

17/19 The non-disappearing dharma, we should understand to be like a bond, and 'actions' to be like the goods received. This non-disappearing dharma may be bound to the realm of desire, bound to the realm of form, bound to the formless realm, and also unbound. As far as distinctions of good, bad and neutral are concerned, it is merely neutral, and the meaning of its being neutral is fully explained in the Abhidharma. It is not cut off by perceiving truths, but is cut off by meditation in the midst of its passing from one effect to another effect.[247] In this way, by virtue of the non-disappearing dharma (karmic) actions produce effects.

(22c10) If it were cut off by perceiving truths, and yet actions still reached similar (rewards) this would mean the error of denying karma, a topic which is fully explained in the Abhidharma. Further, with regard to the never-disappearing dharma; at the time when actions, similar or dissimilar are first receiving a body in a particular realm, only one reward arises.

(22c12) Further actions arise from actions of the body in the present world, and these actions are of two kinds, receiving reward according to their weight. Some say that these actions still remain in existence after having received their rewards, since they do not cease moment by moment.[248]

(22c15) 'Either they cease when at fruition, or they cease at death.' means that for the srotapannas etc. (read: Arhats?) they cease at fruition, but for ordinary people and arhats they cease at

death. 'Herein is a distinction between those with outflows and those without outflows' means that all the stages of sainthood should be distinguished from the srotāpanna (read: Arhat?) in respect of having outflows and not having outflows.[249]

Reply: These ideas are not at all free of the errors of severance and permanence, and for this reason we cannot accept them either.

Question: If that is the case, there will be no karma and retribution.

Reply:

17v20 Although empty, it is not severed
Though it exists it is not permanent.
Karma and reward never disappear
This we call the teaching of the Buddha.

17/20 The ideas which the author of this treatise sets forth are separate from severance and permanence. Why is this? Because karma is utterly empty and has the characteristic of nirvana. Its self-nature being separate from existence, what dharma is there to be cut off, and what dharma is there to disappear? Perverted views are the cause of our transmigrating in samsara, and these too are impermanent, and why? Because dharmas arising from perverted views are empty, deceptive and unreal, and being unreal they are impermanent. Moreover, it is because of your attachments to perverted views and ignorance of the true character that you say that karma does not disappear, and that this is the teaching of the Buddha.

Further:

17v21 All dharmas are fundamentally non-arising
Since they have no fixed nature.
All dharmas are also non-ceasing
Because they do not arise.

17v22 If actions had a nature
They would be called permanent
Inactivity would be called action
For what is permanent cannot act.

17v23 If there were inactive actions,
Then without acting, there could still be sins.
Without lapsing from pure conduct[250]
There could be impurity and transgression.

17v24 This would negate all
Dharmas of worldly expression
Doing evil and doing good
Would not be distinguished.

17v25 If, as you say, actions are fixed
With self-existent natures,
Then, already having received rewards,
One would again receive them.

17v26 If all actions within the world
Arise from the afflictions,
And these afflictions are not real,
How can (actions) then be real?

17/26 In the highest sense actions do not arise, and why? Because

they have no nature. It is on account of their non-arising that they do not cease, it is not because they are permanent that they do not cease. If this were not so, the nature of actions would be fixed and existent, and if actions had a fixed, existent nature, this would constitute permanence. If they were permanent, they would be non-acting actions, and why? Because permanent dharmas cannot do anything.

(23a16) Moreover, if there were non-acting actions, then that man could commit a sin and this man would receive the retribution, or that man could lapse from his pure conduct, yet this man would have the sin, and this would negate conventional worldly dharma.

(23a18) If things were pre-existent, then in winter there would be no need to think about the affairs of spring, and in spring no need to think about the affairs of summer, and there would be errors such as this.

(23a19) Moreover, there would be no differentiation between doing good and doing evil. To perform deeds such as almsgiving and holding to the precepts, etc. is what is meant by 'doing good', and to perform actions of murdering, stealing, etc. is termed 'doing evil'. If there were actions, yet no doing, there would be no (such) distinction.

(23a22) Again, if actions had a fixed, existent nature, then, having already on one occasion received their rewards, one would have to receive them again. Thus, your doctrine that action and reward exist because of a 'non-disappearing dharma' has these kinds of errors.

(23a24) Moreover, if you say that actions arise from the afflictions, these afflictions do not have any fixed (nature) but merely exist by virtue of conceptualised distinctions.[251] Since the afflictions have no reality, how can karma have any reality? Why is this? Because they (the afflictions) have no nature, actions have no nature either.

(23a27) Question: Even if both afflictions and karma have no nature and are unreal, the resultant body manifestly exists; surely it is real?

Reply:

17v27 The afflictions and karma
Are said to be the causes of bodies.
Afflictions and actions being empty,
How much more so the bodies?

17/27 All the saints and sages tell us that the afflictions and karma are the causes and conditions of bodies. Within these conditions desire has the power to fertilise birth, and karma produces the (appropriate) reward of a high, middle, low, attractive, ugly, noble or base, etc., birth. Though you investigate the afflictions and karma in various ways, they have no fixed (nature). How much less do bodies have a fixed (nature), since they are effects of causes and conditions?

(23b5) Question: Although you have refuted karma and retribution on various grounds, nevertheless the sutras say that there is an originator of karma, and since the one who originates karma exists, actions exist, and their rewards exist.

As it is said,

17v28 The one who is obscured in ignorance,
The one who is bound by the bond of desire,
Is not the same, and is not different,
From the original Doer.

17/28 In the Sutra on Beginninglessness[252] it says that all living beings, obscured in ignorance and bound by bonds of desire, transmigrate in beginningless samsara experiencing various sufferings and pleasures. The one who is now experiencing is neither the same as, nor different from, the one who previously acted. If he were the same, then when a man who did evil received the form of an ox, the man would not become an ox, and nor would the ox become a man.[253] If they are different, then all action and reward is lost and we fall into causelessness, and causelessness is annihilation.

(23b14) Therefore, the present recipient is neither the same as, nor different from, the former doer.

Reply:

17v29 Karma does not arise from conditions,
Nor does it arise from non-conditions.
For this reason, there is no
Originator of karma.

17v30 No karma, and no doer,
How can there be action producing a reward?
And if there is no reward
How can there be a recipient of that reward?

17/30 If there is no action and no-one who performs the action, how can there be a reward arising from that action? And if there

is no reward, how can there be a recipient of the reward?

Karma has three aspects;[254] within the five skandhas what we conventionally designate as a person is the 'doer', and the good or evil situation produced by his actions is called the 'reward'. If an originator of karma does not even exist, how much less can there be actions, their rewards, or a recipient of these rewards?

(23b24) Question: Although you have refuted karma and its reward and any originator of karma in various ways, nevertheless we can see that all living beings manifestly perform actions and receive their rewards. What about this?

Reply:

17v31 It is like an illusionary man, made
By the world-honoured one's spiritual power,
And this illusionary man
Transforming into yet another man.

17v32 Just as the first illusionary man
May be called a 'doer',
What the illusionary man performs
May be called an action.

17v33 All afflictions and actions
Doers and rewards,
Are like illusions or dreams,
Like flames or like an echo.

17/33 It is like an illusionary man created by the Buddha's spiritual power, who in turn transforms himself into another illusionary

man. Such an illusionary man has no actual existence and is merely a vision, but the illusionary man's actions of speech in preaching the dharma, and actions of the body in giving alms and so forth, though they are unreal, can be seen by the eye.[255]

Likewise, the body of birth and death, the doer and the action, should be understood in the same say.

(23c7) 'All the afflictions' means the three poisons[256] whose subdivisions constitute such unlimited afflictions as the ninety-eight temptations, the nine bonds, the ten ties, the six defilements and so forth.[257] 'Actions' means the actions of body, speech and mind. In respect of the present and future worlds they are divided into good, bad and neutral, rewards of pain, rewards of pleasure, rewards of neither pain nor pleasure, actions with rewards in the present, actions producing rewards, and actions with rewards in the future, and so on ad infinitum. 'Doer' means one who can originate the afflictions and karma and can receive the rewards and retribution. 'Rewards' means the neutral five skandhas produced from good and bad actions. All karmas such as these are empty and without nature, like an illusion, like a dream, like a flame or like an echo.

Chapter 18 Contemplation of Dharmas 12 verses

18/0 Question: If dharmas are wholly and utterly empty, with no arising and no ceasing, and this is what is meant by 'the true character of dharmas',[258] how can one penetrate it?

Reply: Through the extinction of attachment to 'I' and 'mine', the emptiness of all dharmas is attained. The insight of non-self[259] constitutes penetration.

Question: How do you know that all dharmas are without self?

Reply:

18v1 If self is the five skandhas,
That self will arise and cease.
If self is different from the five skandhas,
Then it will not have the characteristics of the five skandhas.

18v2 If no 'I' exists,
How can there be 'mine'?
It is the extinction of I and mine,
That is called 'attaining the insight of non-self'.

18v3 Attaining the insight of non-self
Is termed 'viewing reality'[260]
One who attains the insight of non-self;
Such a person is rarely found.

18v4 When inner and outer, I and mine,
Entirely cease, with nothing existing,
All receiving is then extinct.
Reception ceasing, the body also ceases.

18v5 When karma and afflictions are extinct,
We call it liberation.
Karma and afflictions are unreal
Penetrating emptiness, all sophistries cease.

18v6 The Buddhas may teach that there is a self,
Or teach that there is no self.
Within the true character of dharmas,
There is neither self, nor non-self.

18v7 The true character of dharmas,
Is severance of mind, actions and speech.
With no production and no cessation
Calm extinction, like nirvana.

18v8 All (things) are real, unreal,
Both real and unreal, and
Neither unreal nor not unreal,
This is called the Buddha's Dharma.

18v9 To know for oneself, not following others,
Calm extinction, without sophistries,
No differences and no distinctions;
This is termed the 'true character'.

18v10 If dharmas arise from conditions,
They neither are, nor differ from, their conditions.
This is why we call the real character
"Not cut off and not permanent".

18v11 Not one and not different,
Not permanent and not cut off;
This is the flavour
Of the sweet nectar of the Buddha's teachings.

18v12 If the Buddha had not emerged in the world,
And the Buddha-dharma had utterly ceased.
The insight of the Pratyekabuddhas
Would have arisen quite separately.

18/12 Some people teach that there is a soul, in which case it must be of two kinds. Either the five skandhas are themselves the soul, or the soul exists apart from the five skandhas.

If the five skandhas are the soul, then the soul will have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. Thus it says in the verse 'if the soul is the five skandhas it will have the characteristics of arising and ceasing', and why? Becuase once arisen, it will perish. Because they have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, the five skandhas have no permanence, and just as the five skandhas have no permanence, the two dharmas of arising and ceasing likewise have no permanence. Why is this? Because arising and ceasing also perish after they have arisen and hence are impermanent. If the soul were the five skandhas, then, since the five skandhas are impermanent, the soul would also be impermanent and would have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, but this is not correct.

(24a21) If the soul existed apart from the five skandhas, the soul would not have the characteristics of the five skandhas. As it

says in the verse: 'if the soul is different from the five skandhas, then it will not have the characteristics of the five skandhas'. Yet no other dharma exists apart from the five skandhas. If there were any such dharma apart from the five skandhas, by virtue of what characteristics, or what dharmas, would it exist?

(24a25) If you say that the soul is like empty space, separate from the five skandhas yet existent, this is also wrong, and why? We have already refuted empty space in the chapter on refuting the six elements. No dharma called 'empty space' exists.

(24a27) If you assert that a soul exists because belief[261] in it exists, this is not correct, and why? Belief is of four kinds; the first is belief in a manifest thing, the second is belief in something known through this (manifest thing) (= inferential belief) as when seeing smoke, we know that there is a fire. The third is belief by analogy as when, in a country with no copper, one uses the example of it being like gold. The fourth is belief in what is taught by saints and sages, as when they say that there are hells, heavens and (the continent of) uttara-kuru.[262] Without seeing anything, we believe the words of the holy men and thus know about them.

(24b3) Such a 'soul' cannot be found amongst these beliefs. It is not found in belief in manifest things, nor in inferential belief, and why? Inferential knowledge means that having previously seen something, you thenceforth know (about) this kind of thing, as for example a man who has previously seen that where there is fire there is smoke, subsequently, seeing

only smoke, knows that there is fire. The concept of 'soul' is not like this, for who could first have seen the soul in the combination of the five skandhas, such that afterwards, seeing the five skandhas, he knows that there is a soul?

(24b7) Suppose you say that there are three kinds of inferential knowledge, the first being 'like the original', the second being 'like the remainder', the third 'seeing together'. 'Like the original' means previously having seen that fire has smoke, seeing smoke now, you know that it is like the original which had fire. 'Like the remainder' means, for example, that when one grain of rice is cooked, you know that the remaining ones are all cooked. 'Seeing together' means, for example, that when you see with your eyes a person going from here to another place, you also see his going. The sun is like this. It emerges from the east and goes to the west. Although you do not see it going, because a man has the characteristic of going, you know that the sun also has going.[263] In the same way suffering, pleasure, hate, desire, ~~learning~~ perception and insight, etc. must also have whatever goes with them. For example, seeing subjects you know that they must rely on some king. But these are all incorrect, and why?

(24b15) In belief through the characteristic of together-ness, having first seen a person combined with a dharma of 'going' who reaches some other place, when you subsequently see the sun reach another place you know that there is the dharma of 'going'. But there is no prior seeing of the five skandhas combined with a soul, such that subsequently seeing the five skandhas you know that there is a soul. Therefore, no existence of a soul can be

established by inferential knowledge of 'together-ness'.

(24b18) There is no soul to be found within the teachings of the saints either, and why? In the teaching of the saints, what they first see with their eyes, they subsequently expound. And since the saints teach other things which can be believed, we should know that when they speak of the hells, etc., these can be believed in, but it is not so with the soul, for there is no-one who, having previously seen a soul, subsequently speaks of it.

(24b22) Therefore, you may seek for a soul within all beliefs such as these four types of belief, but you will not be able to find it. Since you cannot find a soul even though you seek for it, no distinct soul exists separate from the five skandhas.

(24b24) Further, because of the refutation of seeing, seer and seen in the chapter refuting the (six sense-) faculties,[264] the soul is to be refuted in the same way. For if even an eye seeing coarse dharmas cannot be found, how much less can we find a soul by empty delusions, imagination and so forth? For these reasons, we know that there is no self.

(24b26) 'Mine' exists because 'I' exists. If there is no I, then there is no mine. Through putting into practice the holy eight-fold path[265] and extinguishing the causes of I and mine, one attains the firm insight[266] of no I and no mine.

(24b29) In the ultimate sense no I and no mine are also untenable. With no I and no mine, one can truly see all dharmas. Since the eye

of insight in an unenlightened person is veiled by I and mine, he cannot see reality. Now, since the saints have no I or mine, their afflictions are also extinguished. Because their afflictions are extinct, they are able to see the true character of all dharmas. When both inner and outer, I and mine cease, all reception ceases too, and when all reception ceases, the innumerable future bodies also cease, and this is termed 'nirvana without residue'.

(24c5) Question: What of nirvana with residue?

Reply: When all the afflictions and karma have ceased, this is called 'the mind attaining liberation'. All these afflictions and actions arise wholly from conceptualised discriminations and have no reality. Such conceptual discriminations arise wholly from vain thoughts. If one attains to utter emptiness, the true character of all dharmas, then vain thoughts cease, and this is termed 'nirvana with residue'.

(24c10) The true character of dharmas is like this. Because the Buddhas view all living things with omniscience they teach them in various ways, teaching both that there is a self, and that there is no self. If there is a person whose mind is as yet unprepared, who has no inkling of nirvana and knows no fear of punishment, to such a one they teach that there is a self. Also, if someone has attained the Way, perceived the emptiness of all dharmas, and merely uses 'self' as a conventional designation, there is nothing wrong in speaking of a self to such a one as this.

(24c14) There are those who practice the blessed virtues of almsgiving,

holding to the precepts, etc., detest and distance themselves from samsara and suffering but fear nirvana as lasting extinction. For the sake of these, the Buddhas teach that there is no self. All dharmas are merely the combination of causes and conditions; when they arise, they arise empty, when they cease, they cease empty. Therefore they teach that there is no self, and that self is said to exist only as a conventional designation. Again, someone who has attained the Way knows that there is no self, and will not fall into the nihilism, so there is no error in his teaching that there is no self. This is why it says in the verse (18v6) 'The Buddhas teach that there is a self, and they teach that there is no self, but in reality they do not teach either self or non-self'.

(24c20) Question: Even though non-self is the truth, what is wrong with teaching, merely as a convention, that there is a self? Reply: Non-self exists by virtue of the negation of the dharma of self. No fixed self can be found, so how could there be non-self? If there were a fixed non-self, then annihilation of it would give rise to attachment and craving. As it says in the Prajnaparamita, if a bodhisattva has a self, he cannot act, and if he has no self, he cannot act.[267]

(24c25) Question: If it teaches neither self nor non-self, neither emptiness nor non-emptiness, what does the Buddha-dharma teach? Reply: The Buddha teaches the true character of all dharmas, and within that true character there is no path for verbal expressions, for it extinguishes all mental activity. Mind arises because of the characteristic of grasping, exists because of the rewards and retribution of karma in a previous world, and

cannot therefore see the reality of dharmas. This is why he teaches the cessation of mental activities.

(24c28) Question: Even though an unenlightened person's mind cannot see the reality, surely a saint's mind can see the reality? Why does he teach the cessation of all mental activities?
Reply: The true character of dharmas is nirvana, and cessation means nirvana. It is in order to point towards nirvana, that cessation is also termed cessation.[268] If one's mind were real, what use would be such ways to liberation as emptiness, etc? Why, amongst all the samādhis[269] would the samādhi of cessation (nirodha-samāpatti) be regarded as the highest, and why ultimately reach nirvana without residue? Therefore we should know that all mental activities are empty deceptions, and as empty deceptions, should cease. The true character of all dharmas surpasses all dharmas of mental phenomena, has no arising and no ceasing, and has the characteristic of calm extinction, like nirvana.

(25a7) Question: In the sutras it says that all dharmas, having from the beginning the characteristic of calm extinction are themselves nirvana. Why do you say that they are like nirvana?
(25a8) Reply: Those who are attached to dharmas classify dharmas into two kinds, some being worldly, some being of nirvana. They say that the nirvana (-dharmas) are calm and extinct, but do not say that the worldly dharmas are calm and extinct. In this treatise it is taught that all dharmas are empty in nature and have the characteristic of calm extinction. Since those who are attached to dharmas do not understand this, nirvana is used as an example. Just as with your assertion that the

characteristic of nirvana is emptiness, with no characteristics, calm extinction, and no vain thoughts, so it is with all worldly dharmas.

(25a14) Question: If the Buddhas do not teach self, non-self, and the cessation of all mental activities and the cutting-off of ways of verbal expression, how do they make people understand the real character of dharmas?

(25a15) Reply: All the Buddhas have unlimited powers of skilful means,[270] and dharmas have no fixed characteristics. In order to save all living beings, they may teach that everything is real, or they may teach that everything is unreal, or that everything is both real and unreal, or that everything is neither unreal nor not unreal.

(25a18) 'Everything is real'. If you search for a real nature of dharmas, (you will find that) they all enter into the ultimate meaning and become equal, with identical characteristics, which is to say no characteristics, just like streams of different colour and different taste entering into a great ocean of one colour and one taste.

(25a21) 'Everything is unreal'. At the time when one has not yet penetrated into the true character of dharmas, each one can be contemplated separately. They are all unreal, existing merely by the combination of conditions.

(25a22) 'Everything is both real and unreal'. There are three levels of living beings; superior, average and inferior. The superior person sees that the characteristic of dharmas is that they are

neither real nor unreal. The average person sees the characteristics of dharmas as either all real, or all unreal. The inferior man, since his powers of perception are limited, sees the characteristics of dharmas as a little real, and a little unreal, regarding nirvana, because it is an inactive dharma and does not perish as real, and regarding samsara, because it is an active dharma, empty and false, as unreal.

(25a27) 'Neither real nor unreal'. Neither unreal nor not unreal is taught in order to negate 'both real and unreal'.

(25a28) Question: The Buddha in other places says 'separate from neither existence nor nonexistence'. In view of this, how can you say that 'neither existence nor non-existence' is what the Buddha teaches?

(25a29) Reply: In those other contexts he is discoursing in order to refute the four kinds of craving attachment,[271] but if there is no useless arguing about these four theses, and if you listen to what the Buddha teaches you, you will attain the Way. This is why we say 'neither real nor unreal'.

(25b2) Question: We know that the Buddha is discoursing on account of these four theses, but as for attaining the true character of dharmas, by what characteristic can it be known? And, what is the true character?

Reply: 'If you are able not to follow others'.[272] One who does not follow others, means one who, when non-Buddists, even though they display supernatural powers and teach that this is the way and this is not the way, has faith in himself and in his own mind and does not follow them. Even if they transform their

bodies so that he does not know that they are not the Buddha, his mind cannot be diverted because he well understands the true character. Since there is within this (true character) no dharma to be grasped or relinquished, it is called the characteristic of calm extinction. Since it is the characteristic of calm extinction it cannot be vainly argued with sophistries. Sophistries are of two kinds; one is argument from desire, the other is argument from opinion. Within (calm extinction), these two types of sophistries do not exist, and since these two kinds of sophistry do not exist, there is no conceptual discriminating. Lack of any characteristics of distinction and difference is termed the true character.

(25b11) Question: If all dharmas are utterly empty, does this not fall into the error of annihilation? And does no-arising and no-ceasing not fall into the error of permanence?

(25b13) Reply: Not so. Earlier we stated that the true character has no sophistries, that the characteristic of mind is calm extinction and that it cuts off any ways of verbal expression. You in your attachment are now grasping this characteristic, and seeing errors of severance and permanence in the doctrine (dharma) of the true character.

Those who attain the true character teach that all dharmas arise from conditions. They are neither the same as their causes, nor different from their causes, and consequently there is neither severance nor permanence. When the effect is different from its cause, this is severance. If it is not different from its cause, this is permanence.

(25b17) Question: What advantage is there in explaining things in this way?

Reply: If one who is travelling on the path is able to penetrate the meaning of this way, then (for him) all dharmas will be neither identical nor different, neither cut off nor permanent. If he is able to do this, he will achieve the cessation of all afflictions and sophistries, and attain lasting bliss and nirvana. This is why it is said that the Buddha's teaching has the flavour of sweet nectar, just as in worldly terms we say that one who obtains the divine elixir will not grow old, fall ill or die, or experience any degeneracy or distress. This dharma of the true character is the true taste of sweet nectar.

(25b23) The true character taught by the Buddha is threefold. To attain the true character of all dharmas and end all the afflictions is termed the sravaka-dharma. To produce great compassion and arouse the unexcelled mind is called the great vehicle (Mahayana). If a Buddha does not enter the world and there is a time when there is no Buddha-dharma, pratyekabuddhas because of their isolation develop insight independently, for even if a Buddha after saving living beings enters nirvana without residue, and the dharma he left behind completely dies out, if there are any who from a previous world are supposed to attain the Way, then if they meditate a little on the causes for despising and leaving samsara and go alone into the mountains and forests remote from any bustle and confusion, they will attain the Way. These are called pratyekabuddhas.

Chapter 19 Contemplation of Time 6 verses

19/0 Question: Surely time exists, established through causal dependence? Because past time exists, future and present time exist. Because of present time, past and future time exist. Because of future time, past and present time exist. The dharmas of above, middle and below, same and different, and so forth also exist through reciprocal causal dependence.

Reply:

19v1 If, on account of past time,
Future and present exist,
Future and present
Should be in the past.

19/1 If future and present time exist on account of past time, then future and present time should exist within past time, and why? If dharmas are established according to their place of origin, this place should be the dharma. It is like light which is established on account of the lamp, the light existing according to where the lamp is. The same goes for past time. If it establishes future and present time, then future and present time must exist within past time, and if future and present time do exist within past time, then the three periods should all be called 'past time'. Why is this? Because future and present time would be in the past.

(25c15) If all times were entirely in the past, then there would be no future and present times, because it would be entirely the past. But if there were no future and present times, then there would be no past time either, and why? Because past time is only called past time because of future and present time. Just as

future and present time are established on account of past time, so also is past time established on account of future and present time. Now without future and present time, there could be no past time. This is why your earlier statement (v1) that future and present time are established on account of past time is not correct.

(25c21) If you say that future and present time do not exist within past time, but that future and present time are nevertheless established on account of past time, this is incorrect, and why?

19v2 If, within past time
Future and present do not exist,
How can future and present time
Depend on the past?

19/2 If future and present time are not within past time, how can future and present time be established on account of past time? Why is this? If each of the three times had different characteristics, then they could not be established by mutual interdependence. They would be like objects such as pots and cloth etc., each of which is separately established in itself, not depending upon each other. But in fact future and present time are not established independently of past time, past and future time are not established independently of present time, and past and present time are not established independently of future time.

(26a2) Earlier you said that although future and present time do not exist within past time, nevertheless future and present time

are established on account of past time. This is not correct.

Question: What is wrong (in saying that) even though future and present time are not established on account of past time, they nevertheless exist?

Reply:

19v3 Independent of past time
There is no future time,
Nor is there present time.
Therefore the two times do not exist.

19/3 Future and present time are not established independently of past time, and why? If present time did exist independently of past time, in what place would present time exist? It is the same with future time; in what place would future time exist? Therefore, there is no future or present time independent of past time. Because of such mutually dependent existence, in reality there is no time.

19v4 Through this interpretation
We know that the other two times,
Above, middle, below, same and different
And other such dharmas, are all nonexistent.

19/4 Through this interpretation we should know that the other future and past times are also non-existent, and all dharmas such as above, middle and below, same and different etc., are all non-existent. Since middle and below exist on account of above, if there is no above there will be no middle and below. If there were middle and below apart from above then they would not be interdependent. Difference depends on sameness, and sameness depends on difference. If sameness existed as a reality it

would exist independently of difference, and if difference existed as a reality it would exist independently of sameness. All such dharmas as these may be negated in the same way.

(26a20) Question: Since there are such varied divisions as year, month, day, minute etc., we know that time exists.

Reply:

19v5 Time standing still cannot be found
Moving time cannot be found.
If time cannot be found,
How can one speak of characteristics of time?

19v6 Time exists because of objects.
Apart from objects, how can there be time?
If there are not even objects which exist,
How much less can there be time?

19/6 If time does not stay still then it cannot be found, yet if it were still, it would be non-existent. If time cannot be found, how can one expound the characteristics of time? And if there are no characteristics of time, then there is no time. It is because of the arising of objects that we refer to time, and apart from objects there is no time. In what has gone before we have refuted all objects on various grounds. Since objects do not exist, how can time exist?

Chapter 20 Contemplation of Cause and Effect 24 verses

Question:

20/0 Since effects produced by a combination of causes and conditions manifestly exist, we must know that these effects exist through the combination of conditions.

Reply:

20v1 If causes and conditions combine
And an existent effect is produced,
It already existed within the combination.
What need has it to be produced by combination?

20/1 If you say that an effect is produced by a combination of causes and conditions, then this effect already existed within the combination, and yet is something which arises from the combination. This is not correct, and why? If the effect had a pre-existing fixed substance, then it would not have to be produced by combination.

Question: What is wrong with saying that, though no effect exists within the combination of conditions, an effect arises out of the conditions?

Reply:

20v2 If within the combination of conditions
There is no effect.
How can an effect arise
From combination of conditions?

20/2 'If an effect arises out of a combination of conditions, then the effect does not exist within this combination, but is produced from the combination.' This is not correct, and why? If an object has no self-nature, then it can never be produced.

Further:

20v3 If within the combination of conditions
The effect does exist
It should exist within the combination
But in reality it cannot be found.

20/3 If there is an effect which comes from within a combination of conditions, then if it has form, it should be visible, and if it is formless it should be conceivable.[273] But in reality no effect can be found within the combination. Therefore it is not correct (to say) that the effect inheres in the combination.

20v4 If within the combination of conditions
There is no effect,
Then these causes and conditions
Are the same as non-causes and conditions.

20/4 If there is no effect within the combination of causes, then the causes and conditions will be the same as non-causes and conditions. If is like milk being the cause and condition of cream. If there is no cream within the milk, then, since there is no cream within water either, if the milk contains no cream it is the same as water, and we should not say that cream comes only from milk. Therefore (to say) that there is no effect within the combination of causes is not correct.

Question: A cause, having operated as a cause to bring about an effect, ceases, and thus there is cause and effect without such errors (as those above).

Reply:

20v5 If a cause gives cause to an effect
And having caused, then ceases,

This cause has a dual substance
One giving, and one ceasing.

20/5 If a cause, having operated as the cause for an effect then ceases, such a cause will have a dual substance, one called 'giving cause', the other called 'ceasing cause'. This is not correct, because it would be one dharma having two substances. Therefore it is not the case that a cause, having operated as the cause for an effect, then ceases.

Question: If one says that a cause, without giving rise to an effect, operates as a cause and then ceases and an effect arises, what is wrong in this?

Reply:

20v6 If a cause, without giving rise to an effect,
Having operated as a cause then ceases.
The cause having ceased when the effect arises,
Such an effect will be uncaused.

20/6 If a certain cause, without giving rise to an effect, operates as a cause and then ceases, then, the cause having already ceased when the effect arises, the effect will be uncaused. But this is not correct, and why? We can manifestly observe that there is no effect which is produced without a cause. Therefore, your statement that a cause, without giving rise to an effect, may operate as a cause and then cease, and then an effect arises, is not correct.

Question: What is wrong in saying that the effect is produced in the moment of combination of conditions?

Reply:

20v7 If in the moment of combining of conditions

An effect is produced,
Then producer and product
Would occur simultaneously.

20/7 If an effect is produced in the moment of combination of conditions, then producer and product would occur simultaneously, but this is not the case, and why? It is like a father and son, who cannot be born at the same time. Therefore your assertion that an effect arises in the moment of combination of conditions is not correct.

Question: What error is there in (saying that) the arising of the effect comes first, and subsequently conditions combine?
Reply:

20v8 If first there arises an effect
And subsequently combination of conditions
Since it would be separate from causes,
It would constitute an uncaused effect.

20/8 If, as you say, there is production of the effect before conditions have as yet combined, this is not correct, because the effect would be separate from its causes and conditions, and hence would be termed a causeless effect. Therefore to say as you do that an effect arises before conditions have combined, is not correct.

Question: What is wrong in saying that the cause ceases and transforms into the effect?
Reply:

20v9 If the cause transforms into the effect
The cause will reach the effect
Thus a preceding producing cause

Having produced, will produce again.

20/9 Causes are of two kinds. One is the preceding producing (cause), the other is the co-operative producing (cause).[274] If a ceased cause changes into an effect, then the preceding producing cause would decay and again arise, but this is not correct, and why? A thing which has already ceased should not arise again.

(27a2) If you say that a particular cause changes into an effect, this is also incorrect, and why? If it is that particular (cause) then it cannot be regarded as changed. If it is changed, then it cannot be regarded as that particular (cause).

Question: The cause does not completely cease, only its designation (as a cause) ceases; the substance of the cause changes into the effect, just as a lump of clay turns into a jug. The designation of 'lump of clay' is lost, and the designation of 'jug' is produced.

Reply:

(27a6) If the lump of clay ceases before the jug is produced, this does not constitute transformation. Also, the substance of the lump of clay does not produce only jugs. Urns and so forth all come out of clay. If a lump of clay were merely a designation it could not change into a jug.[275] 'Change' means as milk changes into cream. Therefore, to say as you do that although the designation of the cause ceases it changes into the effect is not correct.

Question: Even though the cause has ceased and disappeared, it can still produce an effect. Therefore, there are effects,

and no such errors.

Reply:

20v10 How can a cause, ceased and disappeared,
Possibly produce an effect?
Or, if the cause is in the effect
How can it produce the effect?

20/10 If a cause has ceased and is gone, how can it possibly produce an effect? And if the cause does not cease but combines with the effect, how can it produce the effect?

Question: Particular causes have effects everywhere, and such effects arise.

Reply:

20v11 If causes have effects everywhere
Again, what kinds of effects do they produce?
The cause may see, or not see, the effect[276]
In neither of these two is there producing.

20/11 Suppose that a certain cause does not 'see' its effect. It should not even produce that effect, how much less if it sees it? If the cause does not itself see the effect, then it should not produce the effect. Why is this? If it does not see the effect, the effect will not follow the cause. Moreover, if the effect does not yet exist, how can (the cause) produce the effect? If the cause has previously seen the effect, it does not need to produce it again, since the effect already exists.

Further:

20v12 If you say that a past cause
Goes with a past effect,

Or future, or present effect;
These never combine.

20v13 If you say that a future cause
Goes with a future effect
Or with a present or past effect -
These never combine.

20v14 If you say that a present cause
Goes with a present effect
Or with a future or past effect -
These never combine.

20/14 A past effect does not combine with a past, future or present cause. A future effect does not combine with a future, present or past cause. A present effect does not combine with a present, future or past cause. These three kinds of effect never combine with past, future or present causes.

Further:

20v15 If there is no combining,
How can a cause produce an effect?
If there is combination
How can a cause produce an effect?

20/15 If cause and effect do not combine then there is no effect. If there is no effect, how can the cause produce an effect? If you say that the cause can produce the effect in the moment when cause and effect combine, this is also incorrect, and why? If the effect is within the cause, then, the effect already being existent within the cause, how can it arise again?

Further:

20v16 If the cause is empty [277] and there is no effect,
How can the cause produce an effect?
If the cause is not empty and there is an effect,
How can the cause produce an effect?

20/16 'If a cause has no effect' means that because it has no effect a cause is empty, so how can the cause produce an effect? It is like someone who is not pregnant; how can they produce a child? If the effect pre-exists in the cause, then, since the effect already exists, it does not have to be produced again. We shall now further discuss the effect:

20v17 An effect which is not empty[278] is not produced.
An effect which is not empty does not cease.
Because where an effect is not empty
It neither arises nor ceases.

20v18 Since an effect is empty it is not produced.
Since an effect is empty it does not cease.
Where an effect is empty
It neither arises nor ceases.

20/18 If an effect is not empty, it should not be produced and should not cease. Why is this? If an effect already has a fixed existence within a cause, it does not need to be produced again, and since there is no production, there is no cessation. Therefore, because effects are not empty, they neither arise nor cease.

(27b21) If you say that effects are empty, and hence do arise and cease this is also wrong, and why? If an effect is empty, emptiness means that there is nothing which exists, so how can arising

and ceasing exist? This is why it is said that where the effect is empty, there is neither arising nor ceasing.

Continuing, we shall now refute cause and effect in terms of unity and difference:

20v19 That cause and effect are one -
This is never the case.
That cause and effect are different -
This, too, is not correct.

20v20 If cause and effect are one
Producer and produced are one.
If cause and effect are different
Cause is the same as non-cause.

20v21 If the effect has a fixed, existent nature
What does the cause cause, which is produced?
If the effect has a fixed non-existent nature,
What does the cause cause, which is produced?

20v22 If a cause does not produce an effect,
Then it does not have the characteristic of a cause.
If it does not have the characteristic of a cause,
From what can there be effects?

20v23 If, out of causes and conditions,
Combination is produced.
Combination itself does not produce
So how can it produce an effect?

20v24 Therefore effects are not produced
By the combination, or non-combination of conditions.
If there are no effects
Where is the dharma of 'combination'?

20/24 The dharma of 'combination of causal conditions' cannot produce a self-substance. Since there is no self-substance how can it produce any effect? Therefore, effects are not produced by a combination of conditions, nor are they produced by non-combination. If no effects exist, where can there be a dharma of combination?

Chapter 21 Contemplation of becoming and dissolution[279]

20 verses

Question:

21/0 Everything in the world manifestly has the characteristic of dissolution. Therefore, dissolution exists.

Reply:

21v1 Whether apart from becoming, or together with becoming,
In neither case is there dissolution.
Whether apart from dissolution, or together with dissolution,
In neither case is there becoming, either.

21/1 Whether there is becoming or there is no becoming, in neither case does dissolution exist. Whether there is dissolution, or there is no dissolution, in neither case does becoming exist. Why is this?

21v2 If separate from becoming,
How can dissolution exist?
It would be like death without birth.
This is not correct.

21v3 If becoming and dissolution exist together,
How can there be becoming and dissolution?
It would be like worldly birth and death
Existing simultaneously - this is not correct.

21v4 Apart from dissolution,
How could there be becoming?
For there is never a time
When impermanence is not found in all dharmas.

21/4 Dissolution cannot be found apart from becoming, and why? If there were dissolution apart from becoming, then there would be dissolution independent of becoming, and dissolution consequently would be uncaused. Moreover, dharmas which had not become could nevertheless be dissolved. 'Becoming' means the combining of conditions. 'Dissolution' means the dispersion of conditions. If there were dissolution apart from becoming, then with no becoming, what would dissolve? It is just as when there is no jug, we cannot say that the jug has dissolved. Hence, there is no dissolution apart from becoming.

(27c28) If you say that dissolution exists together with becoming, this is also incorrect, and why? A dharma first comes into being separately, and (only) afterwards is there combination. The combined dharma is not separate from the different (elements). If it dissolved separately from its different (elements), the dissolution would be causeless. Therefore, dissolution does not exist together with becoming.

(28a2) As to no becoming apart from dissolution or together with dissolution; if there were becoming apart from dissolution, then becoming would be permanent. Permanence means not having the characteristic of dissolution, but in reality we do not see any dharma which is permanent and lacks the characteristic of dissolution. Therefore, there is no becoming apart from dissolution.

(28a4) If you say that becoming and dissolution exist together, this is also wrong. Becoming and dissolution are opposites. How can they exist simultaneously? It is like a man having hair and

not having any hair - he cannot have both simultaneously. Becoming and dissolution are also like this. Therefore, it is not the case that becoming exists jointly with dissolution, and why?

(28a7) If you say that dharmas are distinct, asserting that there is constant dissolution within becoming, this is not correct, and why? If there were constant dissolution within becoming, then there would be no dharma of abiding, but in reality there is abiding. Therefore, no becoming can exist, either apart from dissolution or together with dissolution.

Further:

21v5 Becoming and dissolution are not established together
Nor are they established separately.
Neither of these is tenable.
How can becoming exist?

21/5 As for becoming not being established together with dissolution, and the two not being established separately from each other; if the two are established together, then, the two dharmas being opposites, how can they exist simultaneously? But if they exist separately, then they are uncaused. In neither way can they be established, so how can becoming exist? If it does exist, you should explain how.[280]

Question: Dharmas which have the characteristic of being exhausted and ceased,[281] manifestly exist. Such exhausted and ceased dharmas are said to be both exhausted and not exhausted. Surely becoming and dissolution exist in the same way?

Reply:

21v6 Exhausted, there is no becoming,

Not exhausted, there is also no becoming.
Exhausted, there is no dissolution
Not exhausted, there is also no dissolution.[282]

21/6 All dharmas, morning, noon and night, instant by instant, are constantly ceasing, becoming exhausted and passing away, like flowing water which never stands still. This is termed 'exhaustion'. This process cannot be grasped, and cannot be explained. Like a mirage, which has no fixed nature to get hold of, so exhaustion has no conceivable fixed nature. How can one subdivide it and assert that becoming exists? This is why it is said that exhaustion has no becoming either. Since becoming does not exist there can be no dissolution either, and this is why it is said that exhaustion has no dissolution either.

(28a25) Where there is, moment by moment, a constant succession of arisings and ceasings with no severance this is termed 'non exhaustion'. In this case dharmas are fixed, permanent and abiding and are not cut off, so how can one differentiate them and assert that 'this is a moment of becoming'? This is why it is said that there is no becoming in non-exhaustion either. Since there is no becoming, there is no dissolution, and this is why it is said that there is no dissolution in non-exhaustion either. One may investigate in this way, but since no real entity can be found, there is no becoming and no dissolution.

Question: Even if we set aside becoming and dissolution, what is wrong with allowing that there are simply dharmas?

Reply:

21v7 Apart from becoming and dissolution,
There are no dharmas.
If they should be separated from dharmas
Becoming and dissolution also would not exist.

21/7 There are no dharmas apart from becoming and dissolution: If there were dharmas with no becoming and no dissolution, such dharmas would have to be either nonexistent, or permanent, but no permanent dharmas exist in the world. Your statement that there are dharmas apart from becoming and dissolution is not correct.

(28b6) Question: What is wrong in saying that only becoming and dissolution exist, without dharmas?

Reply: To say that becoming and dissolution exist without dharmas is also wrong, and why? Apart from dharmas, what is there to become, and what is there to dissolve? Therefore it is not the case that becoming and dissolution exist apart from dharmas.

Further:

21v8 If dharmas' nature is empty[283]
What can become or dissolve?
If their nature is not empty
There will also be no becoming or dissolution.

21/8 If the nature of dharmas were empty, being empty, how could they become or dissolve? If the nature of dharmas were not empty, then not being empty they would have a fixed existence, and again there could be no becoming or dissolution.

Further:

21v9 That becoming and dissolution are one -
This is not the case.
That becoming and dissolution are different -
This also is not the case.

21/9 If you thoroughly investigate becoming and dissolution, no unity can be discovered, and why? Because they have different characteristics, and are differentiated in various ways. But also no difference can be found in becoming and dissolution, and why? Because they are not separated, and because they would be uncaused.

Further:

21v10 If you say that arising and ceasing
Are seen by the eyes to exist,
Seeing arising and ceasing as existent
Is considered a delusion and deception.

21/10 If someone says 'arising and ceasing exist since we see them with our eyes; how can they be refuted by words and teachings?' This is not correct, and why? Seeing arising and ceasing with one's eyes is due to ignorance and delusion. In seeing the nature of dharmas, they are empty and have no fixed (nature); they are like an illusion, like a dream. It is only that the unenlightened man has attained his eyes on account of his delusion in a former world. Because of his false conceptualisation and discrimination in the present world, he says that his eyes see arising and ceasing. In the ultimate sense, there is, in reality, no arising or ceasing. This topic has already been discussed at length, in the chapter refuting the (three) marks. (ch 7)

Further:

21v11 Dharmas do not produce dharmas
Nor do they produce non-dharmas
Non-dharmas do not produce dharmas,
Nor (do they produce) non-dharmas.

21/11 As for 'Dharmas are not produced from dharmas': Whether they disappear or reach (each other),[284] both are incorrect. If dharmas are produced from dharmas, then whether they reach (each other) or whether they disappear, they are independent, and being independent they fall into (the error of) severance or permanence. If a dharma is produced from a dharma after it has been reached, this dharma, although it has already been reached, is called arisen, and this would be permanence. Moreover, having already arisen, it would be arising again, and it would be arising uncaused, which is not correct.

(28c4) If a dharma is produced from another dharma after it has disappeared, this would mean the cause would be missing, and the one which arose would be uncaused. Therefore no dharma is produced from a dharma which disappears.

(28c6) As for 'non-dharmas are not produced from dharmas'; 'non-dharma' means that there is nothing which exists. 'Dharma' means an existent. How can the characteristic of nonexistence be produced from the characteristic of existence? Therefore, non-dharmas do not arise from dharmas.

(28c7) As for 'dharmas do not arise from non-dharmas'; 'non-dharma' means nonexistence. How can nonexistence produce existence? If existence arose from nonexistence this would be causelessness, and causelessness would be a great error. Therefore, dharmas

are not produced from non-dharmas.

(28c10) As for 'non-dharmas are not produced from non-dharmas'; 'non-dharma' means that there is nothing which exists. How could nothing which exists be produced by nothing which exists? It is like a rabbit's horns which do not produce a tortoise's hair. Therefore, non-dharmas are not produced from non-dharmas.

Question: Although you have analysed dharmas and non-dharmas in various ways as being non-produced, nevertheless dharmas surely do produce dharmas?

Reply:

21v12 Dharmas are not produced from themselves,
Nor are they produced from another.
Nor are they produced from self and other,
How can they be produced?

21/12 Since nothing exists when a dharma has not yet arisen, and it itself has not arisen, dharmas are not self-produced. If a dharma has not yet been produced, there is no 'other', and because there is no other you cannot say that it arises from another. Moreover, when it has not yet arisen, it does not exist itself, and if no self and no other exists then it is not produced from the two together. Since it is not produced in any of these three ways, how can dharmas be produced from dharmas?

Further:

21v13 If someone accepts the existence of dharmas,[285]
He falls into severance or permanence.
You must know that for one who accepts dharmas

They will be either permanent or impermanent.

21/13 Someone who "accepts dharmas" differentiates between this one as good, this one as not good, as permanent, as impermanent and so on. Such a person inevitably falls into either a view of permanence or a view of severance, and why? Dharmas can be accepted in two ways, as either permanent or impermanent. Both are incorrect, and why? If (taken as) permanent, you straightaway fall into the extreme of permanence. If impermanent, you straightaway fall into the extreme of severance.

Question:

21v14 There are those who accept dharmas
And do not fall into severance or permanence.
Since the continuity of cause and effect
Involves neither severance nor permanence.

21/14 There are those who accept and admit distinctions in speaking of dharmas, yet do not fall into severance or permanence. For instance, the sutras teach that the five skandhas are impermanent, suffering, empty and without self,[286] but without severance, and they teach that sins and merits are never lost throughout countless kalpas, yet this is not permanence, and why? Because such dharmas constantly arise and cease in a succession of causes and effects, coming and going without interruption. Because they arise and cease, there is no permanence. Because they have continuity, there is no severance.

Reply:

21v15 If causes and effects arise and cease
In succession, with no cessation
Since what has ceased does not arise again,

The cause should be considered extinct.

21/15 If you say that by virtue of the continuous succession of causes and effects, dharmas are neither severed nor permanent, then if a ceased dharma has already ceased it will not arise again, and this is severance of the cause. If the cause is cut off, how can there be continuity, since what has ceased does not arise again?

Further:

21v16 A dharma abiding in its own self-nature
Should not be both existent and nonexistent.
Nirvana extinguishes the continuity
And thus falls into severance.

21/16 At the time when a dharma is fixed within the characteristic of existence, it is not without characteristics, just as a jug, when it is fixed in the characteristics of a jug, does not have the characteristics of destruction. As long as the jug exists, it does not have the characteristics of destruction, but when the jug does not exist, there are no characteristics of destruction either, and why? Because if there is no jug, there is nothing to be destroyed. Understood in this way, cessation is untenable.

Without cessation there can be no production either, and why? Because arising and ceasing are mutually interdependent, and also because there would be the errors of permanence etc. Therefore, existence and nonexistence may not co-exist in one dharma.

(29a18) Also, your earlier assertion that because there is a succession of arising and ceasing of cause and effect, one can accept dharmas

without falling into severance and permanence, is not correct, and why? You say that because there is a continuity of cause and effect, there is continuity of characteristics of the three existences,[287] and that nirvana means continuity of the characteristic of cessation. If this were so, then at the time of nirvana, one ought to fall into severance and cessation, because of the cessation of the continuity of characteristics of the three existences.

Further:

21v17 If the first existence[288] ceases
There will be no subsequent existence.
If the first existence does not cease
There will also be no subsequent existence.

21/17 'The first existence' means existence in the present time-period. 'Subsequent existence' means existence in a future period of time. If the first existence ceases and afterwards there is the subsequent existence, it will be uncaused, and this is not correct. Therefore, we cannot say that the first existence ceases and (then) there is the subsequent existence.

(29a27) If the first existence does not cease, there will not be any subsequent existence either, and why? If the subsequent existence exists when the first existence has not yet ceased, this would be two existences existing at one time, and this is not correct. Therefore, if the first existence does not cease, there will be no subsequent existence.

Question: The subsequent existence does not arise through the cessation of the first existence, nor does it arise through the

non-cessation of the first existence. It is simply produced at the moment of cessation.

Reply:

21v18 If in the moment of cessation of the first existence,
There is a subsequent existence produced.
The moment of cessation is one existence,
The moment of production is another existence.

21/18 If the subsequent existence is produced in the moment of cessation of the first existence, this is two existences together in one moment, one existence being the moment of cessation, the other existence being the moment of production.

Question: It is not that the moment of cessation and the moment of production are two existences together, it is merely that we manifestly see that when the first existence ceases, the subsequent existence arises.

Reply:

21v19 If you say that arising and ceasing
Take place simultaneously
Then when these skandhas die,
These same skandhas are born.

21/19 If the moment of arising and the moment of ceasing are one moment and not two existences, and you say that in the moment when the first existence ceases, the subsequent existence arises, then according to whatever skandhas one dies in, these skandhas should be (re)born, and one should not be reborn in any other skandhas. Why is this? Because the one who dies will be the same as the one who is reborn. But these dharmas of 'dying' and 'being born' are opposites, and cannot both occupy one moment or one place. Therefore, your earlier statements that the

moment of cessation and the moment of arising are one moment and not two existences, and that it is merely a case of manifestly seeing that when the first existence ceases, the subsequent existence is produced, are not correct.

Further:

21v20 Seeking a continuity of existence in the three periods of time
It cannot be found.
If it is not existent in the three periods of time,
What continuity of existence exists?

21/20 'The three existences' means desire-existence, form-existence and no-form existence.[289] It is because one is unable to attain true insight within beginningless samsara and death, the three existences eternally succeed each other. Now, even if we earnestly seek for them in the three periods of time,[290] they cannot be found, and if not within the three periods of time, then where can this continuous succession of existences take place? You should know that the continuity of existence exists only by virtue of delusions and perverted views. In reality, it does not exist.

Chapter 22 Contemplation of the Thus-Come (Tathāgata)[291]

16 verses

Question:

22/0 Honoured in all the worlds,[292] only the Thus-Come has right and perfect knowledge.[293] He is called 'King of the Dharma' and 'omniscient one',[294] so surely he exists?

Reply: Now examine and consider this: If he exists, then he must be grasping.[295] If he does not exist, what is there which grasps? Why is this? The Thus-Come ...

22v1 ... is neither the skandhas, nor separate from the skandhas,
He and they are not in each other.
The Thus-Come does not have the skandhas
In what place does the Thus-Come exist?

22/1 If the Thus-Come really exists, (then) either the five skandhas are the Thus-Come, or the Thus-Come exists separately from the five skandhas, or the five skandhas are within the Thus-Come, or the Thus-Come is within the five skandhas, or the Thus-Come has the five skandhas, but none of these is the case.

(29c14) The five skandhas are not the Thus-Come, and why? Because they have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. Since the five skandhas have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, if the Thus-Come were the five skandhas, the Thus-Come would have those same characteristics of arising and ceasing. If he had the characteristics of arising and ceasing this would involve the errors of the Thus-Come being impermanent, annihilated, etc. Also the receiver and the dharma of receiving would be one, the receiver being the Thus-Come and the dharma of receiving being

the five skandhas. But this is not correct, and therefore the Thus-Come is not the five skandhas.

(29c19) The Thus-Come does not exist separately from the five skandhas either. If the Thus-Come existed separately from the five skandhas, he would not have the characteristics of arising and ceasing. If this were the case, the Thus-Come would have the error of permanence etc., and in addition all the functions such as the eye, etc., would not be able to see or know, and this would not be correct. Therefore, the Thus-Come does not exist separately from the five skandhas either.

(29c22) The five skandhas are also not found within the Thus-Come and why? If the five skandhas were within the Thus-Come, this would be like fruit in a bowl, or fish in water; they would be different from each other. If they were different, this would involve the error of permanence etc., as above. Therefore, the five skandhas are not situated within the Thus-Come.

(29c25) The Thus-Come, moreover, is not within the five skandhas, and why? If the Thus-Come were within the five skandhas, this would be like a man being in a bed, or milk being in a bowl. They would thus be distinct entities, and the same errors as discussed above would apply. Therefore, the Thus-Come is not within the five skandhas.

(29c28) The Thus-Come does not have the five skandhas either, and why? If the Thus-Come had the five skandhas, it would be like a man who has a child. They would thus be distinct entities, and this being the case, the same errors as above would apply, so

this is not correct. Therefore, the Thus-Come does not have the five skandas. You may look for him in these five ways but you will not be able to grasp what kind of being this Thus-Come is.

Question: Though one seeks for the Thus-Come in these ways and be unable to find him, nevertheless, by the combination of the five skandhas, the Thus-Come exists.[296]

Reply:

22v2 If the Thus-Come exists by the combining of the skandhas,
Then he has no self-nature.
If he has no self-nature
How can he exist on account of another?[297]

22/2 If the Thus-Come exists because of the combination of the five skandhas, then he has no self-nature, and why? Because he exists on account of the combination of the five skandhas.

Question: The Thus-Come does not exist by means of a self-nature, but merely on account of other-natures.

Reply: If he has no self-nature, how can he exist by virtue of other-natures? Why is this? Other-natures also have no self-nature, and since there is no reciprocal dependence, no other-natures can be found. Since they cannot be found, they do not constitute 'others'.

Further:

22v3 If a dharma arises on account of another,
Then it has no self.
If a dharma has no self
How can it be the Thus-Come?

22/3 If a dharma arises by virtue of causes and conditions, then it

will have no self. It is like a fist which exists by virtue of the five fingers, but has no own-substance. In the same way we speak of a 'self' on account of the five skandhas, but this 'self' has no own-substance. 'Self' has various names such as living being, man, god, Thus-Come etc. If the Thus-Come exists by virtue of the five skandhas, then he has no own-nature, and since he has no own-nature he has no self. Since he has no self, how can you describe him as 'The Thus-Come'? This is why it says in the verse "if a dharma arises on account of another, then it has no self" and "if a dharma has no self, how can it be the Thus-Come?"

Further:

22v4 If there is no own-nature
How can there be other-nature?
Apart from own-nature or other-nature
What can constitute a Thus-Come?

22/4 If there is no own-nature, then other-nature cannot exist either, because it is only on account of own-nature that we refer to other-nature. If the one does not exist, the other will not exist either, and consequently neither own-nature nor other-nature exists. Apart from an own-nature or other-nature, who is there to be a Thus-Come?

Further:

22v5 If, independent of the five skandhas,
A Thus-Come were pre-existent.
By virtue of his receiving the skandhas now
He would be described as a Thus-Come.

22v6 In reality there is no receiving of the skandhas now,
Nor any dharma of a Thus-Come.
If, by not receiving, he does not exist
How can he receive them now?[298]

22v7 When there has not yet been receiving
We do not call what is to be received 'received'.
Without the dharma of reception
There is nothing to be called a Thus-Come.

22v8 If the Thus-Come cannot be found
In unity or in difference,
And sought in five ways he cannot be found,
How can he exist in receiving?

22v9 Moreover the five receptive skandhas
Do not exist by virtue of own-nature.
If they have no own-nature
How can there be an other-nature?

22/9 If the Thus-Come already existed before receiving the five skandhas, then this Thus-Come would receive the five skandhas now, having already become a Thus-Come. But in reality a Thus-Come does not exist before the time when the five skandhas are received, so how will he receive them now? Also, if he does not receive the five skandhas, the five skandhas will not be termed 'received', and without receiving them, there is nothing to be called a Thus-Come.

(30b11) You can search for the Thus-Come within unity and difference but you will not be able to find him. You can search for him

five ways in the five skandhas but you will not find him there either. This being the case, how can you assert that the Thus-Come exists within the five skandhas? Also, the five skandhas which are received do not exist by virtue of any own-nature. You may say that they exist by virtue of other-nature, but if they do not come from own-nature, how can they exist by virtue of other-nature? Why is this? Because if there is no own-nature, there is no other-nature either.

Further:

22v10 By such interpretations
Receiving is empty, the receiver is empty[299]
But how, by means of emptiness
Can one speak of an empty **Thus-come**?

22/10 Analysed according to these ideas, receiving and the recipient are entirely empty. If receiving is empty, how can one speak of an empty Thus-come in terms of empty receiving?

Question: You say that receiving is empty, and that the recipient is empty - is this not a fixed existent emptiness?
Reply: Not so, and why?

22v11 Emptiness cannot be expressed
Non-emptiness cannot be expressed.
Both, and neither, cannot be expressed
They are discussed merely as conventional names.

22/11 The emptiness of dharmas cannot be expressed. The non-emptiness of dharmas cannot be expressed either. That dharmas are both empty and not empty and that dharmas are neither empty nor non-empty cannot be expressed either and why? Because they

are merely for refuting their opposites and are taught only as conventional names. If you correctly contemplated and reflected in this way, then you would not make difficulties out of difficulties within the true character of dharmas, and why?

22v12 Within the characteristic of calm quiescence,
The four (views) of permanence, impermanence etc., do not exist.
Within the characteristic of calm quiescence,
The four (views) of limit, no limit etc., do not exist.

22/12 The true character of all dharmas is subtle, calm quiescence, but we produce four kinds of erroneous views on account of the past;[300] that the world is permanent, that the world is impermanent, that the world is both permanent and impermanent, and that the world is neither permanent nor impermanent. In calm quiescence none of these exist at all, and why? The true character of all dharmas is utter clarity and purity, and cannot be grasped. If even emptiness is not accepted, how much less these four kinds of views? These four views all arise on account of reception, but within the real character of all dharmas there is nothing which is caused by receiving.

(30c7) Through these four kinds of views we regard ourselves as noble and regard others as base, but in the true character of dharmas there is no 'you' or 'I', and this is why it is said that in calm quiescence the four views do not exist.

(30c9) Just as with the four views which exist in regard to the past, so it is with the four views which exist in regard to the future; that the world has limits, the world has no limits, that the world both has and does not have limits, and that the

world neither has nor does not have limits.

Question: If you refute the Thus-Come in this way, doesn't this mean that there is no Thus-Come?

Reply:

22v13 One whose false views are deeply entrenched
Will say that there is no Thus-Come.
The Thus-Come's characteristic of calm quiescence
He will distinguish as existing, and as not.

22/13 False views are of two kinds; the first denies worldly bliss, the second denies the path to nirvana.

Denying worldly bliss is the false view of the coarse, immature man. He says that there is no sin and no merit, and no saints and sages such as Thus-Comes etc. Generating such false views, he forsakes good and does evil, and thus denies the bliss of the world. The one who denies the path to nirvana is deeply attached to self, and discriminates between existent and non-existent, developing good and extinguishing evil. Since he develops goodness, he obtains worldly bliss, but because he discriminates between being and nonbeing he does not attain nirvana. Therefore, if you say that the Thus-Come does not exist,[301] this is a deeply entrenched false view, and you lose even worldly bliss - how much more so nirvana? But if you say that the Thus-Come exists this is also a false view, and why? Because the Thus-Come has the characteristic of calm quiescence yet you are making various distinctions, differentiating within the characteristics of calm quiescence, the Thus-Come as existing or not existing.

22v14 Within the emptiness of such a nature
One may speculate yet not discover
Whether, after the passing of the Thus-Come
He can be distinguished as existent or non-existent.

22/14 Since the nature of the true character of all dharmas is emptiness we should not speculate as to whether the Thus-Come exists, or does not exist, or both does and does not exist after his passing. From the very beginning the Thus-Come was utterly empty; how much more so after his decease?

22v15 The Thus-Come transcends sophistries
Yet men still produce sophistries.
Sophistries destroy the eye of insight,
Such as these do not see the Buddha.

22/15 'Sophistries' means recollected thoughts, grasping of characteristics, distinguishing this from that, saying that the Buddha is extinct or is not extinct, and so forth. Since man in order to pursue sophistries inverts his eye of insight,[302] he is unable to see the dharma-body of the Thus-Come. In this chapter on the Thus-Come, we have considered, from beginning to end, (the idea of) a fixed nature of the Thus-Come, and we have been unable to discover one. Therefore, the verse says:

22v16 The nature of the Thus-Come
Is the very nature of the world
The Thus-Come has no nature
The world, also, has no nature.[303]

22/16 In this chapter we have considered and earnestly investigated the nature of the Thus-Cume, which is in fact the nature of all the worlds.

Question: What kind of thing is this nature of the Thus-Come?

Reply: The Thus-Come has no nature. Equally, the world has no nature.

Chapter 23 Contemplation of Perverted Views[304] 24 verses

Question:

23v1 As a result of conceptual discrimination
Lust, anger and delusion arise
Perverted conceptions of purity and impurity
Are all produced from conditions.[305] .

23/1 The sutras say that because of the conceptualised discrimination of the perverted ideas of purity and impurity, lust, anger and delusion arise.[306] Therefore we know that lust, anger and delusion must exist.

Reply:

23v2 If you say that perverted views of purity and impurity
Produce the three poisons,[307]
Then the three poisons are without self-nature.
Consequently, the defilements[308] have no reality.

23/2 If the defilements arise on account of the conceptualisation of perverted views of purity and impurity, then they have no self-nature. Consequently, the defilements are unreal.

Further:

23v3 Whether or not there exists a dharma of self
Is something which can never be established
Without a self, the existence or nonexistence of defilements
Cannot be established either.

23/3 Whether the self does or does not exist in causes and conditions cannot be established. Now, if there is no self, how can the existence or nonexistence of the defilements be established? Why is this?

23v4 Who has these defilements?
Such a one cannot be established.
If the defilements exist apart from this (self)
Then they are not part of it.

23/4 'Defilement' means a thing which can afflict someone. The afflicted one must be a sentient being, but such a sentient being cannot be discovered, no matter where you search for him. If you say that the defilements exist separately from the living being, then there is no entity to which the defilements belong. If you assert that, although there is no self, the defilements are located in the mind, then this is also wrong, and why?

23v5 Just as in the five ways of viewing the body (as self)
You seek it but cannot find it
So with the defilements in the defiled mind,
You can seek five ways but cannot find them.

23/5 Just as with the view of body-as-self[309] - you can look for it in five ways in the five skandhas but cannot find it - so it is with the defilements in the defiled mind. You can look for them in five ways but you will not be able to find them.

Further:

23v6 The perverted views of purity and impurity
Therefore have no self-nature
How, then, can the defilements arise
With these two as their cause?

23/6 'The perverted views of purity and impurity'; 'perverted' means vain and illusory. Being vain and illusory (such views) have no self-nature, and since they have no nature the perverted views do no exist. If there are no perverted views, how

can you assert that the defilements arise on the basis of perverted views?

Question:

23v7 Form, sound, scent, taste, touch and the other dharmas[310]
Make up six kinds (of dharma)
These six kinds (of dharma)
Are the root of the three poisons.

23/7 These six avenues are the root of the three poisons. Perverted views of purity and impurity arise because of these six avenues (of the senses). Desire, anger and delusion arise on account of perverted views of purity and impurity.

Reply:

23v8 Form, sound, scent, taste and touch
And dharmas; these six kinds
Are all empty, like flames or dreams
Or like a magic Gandharva-city.[311]

23v9 In six things of this kind,
How can there be purity and impurity?
They are just like an illusionary man
Or a reflection in a mirror.

23/9 The own-substances of form, sound, scent, taste, touch and the dharmas, at the time when they are not yet combined in the mind, are empty: there is nothing which exists. They are like fire, like a dream, like an illusory man or an image in a mirror. They are merely deceptions in the mind and have no fixed characteristics. In six avenues such as these, how can purity and impurity exist?

Further:

23v10 No impurity can exist
Independently of the characteristic of purity.
Impurity depends on purity
Therefore, there is no impurity.

23/10 Independent of purity, there can be no pre-existing impurity, for on what basis could one speak of impurity?[312] Therefore impurity does not exist.

Further:

23v11 There is no purity
Except in relation to impurity
Purity exists on account of impurity
Therefore purity does not exist.

23/11 There can be no pre-existent purity, independent of impurity. How can you assert (the existence of) purity? Therefore, there is no purity.

Further:

23v12 If there is no purity
How can there be lust?
If there is no impurity
How can there be anger?

23/12 Where there is no purity and impurity, lust and anger do not arise.

Question: The Sutras teach that there are four perverted views,[313] of permanence, etc. If we see permanence within impermanence, this is called a perverted view. If we see impermanence in impermanence, this is not a perverted view, and the same goes for the other three perverted views. Since the perverted views

exist, the one who has perverted views must exist. Why do you say that none of this exists?

Reply:

23v13 To cling to permanence in impermanence
Is called perverted perception.
There is no permanence in emptiness,
So where can the perverted perception of permanence exist?

23/13 If you cling to permanence in impermanence, this constitutes perverted perception. But in the emptiness of dharmas' natures,[314] there is no permanence. What place is there in this for a perverted view of permanence? The other three (views) are also like this.

23v14 If clinging to impermanence
Within impermanence is not a perverted view,
Since there is no impermanence in emptiness,
Why is this not a perverted view?

23/14 Suppose that a person clings[315] to impermanence, saying that this impermanence is not to be termed a perverted view; in the emptiness of dharmas' natures, there is no impermanence. Since impermanence does not exist there, who is there to call it a non-perverted view?[316] It is the same with the other three views.

Further:

23v15 That which is clung to, the clinger and the clinging[317]
And also the dharma which clinging employs;[318]
All these have the characteristic of calm quiescence.
How can clinging possibly exist?

23/15 'That which is clung to' means the object. 'The clinger' means

the doer. 'Clinging' means the deed. The dharma is the thing which clinging employs. All these things are empty in nature and have the characteristic of calm quiescence, as explained in the chapter on the Thus-Come,[319] and therefore there is no clinging.

Further:

23v16 If there is no dharma of clinging
Incorrectly speaking, these are perverted views.
Correctly speaking, they are not perverted views,
For who is there to have these things?[320]

23/16 'Clinging' means discriminative conceptualising of this and that, being and non-being, and so on.[321] If none of this clinging exists, who is there to have wrong and perverted views, and who is there to have correct and non-perverted views?

Further:

23v17 Existing perverted views do not produce perverted views
Nonexistent perverted views do not produce perverted views.
The perverted viewer does not produce perverted views,
Nor does the non-perverted produce them.

23v18 Since perverted views are not produced
In the moment of perversion either,
You can see for yourselves;
Who is there to produce perverted views?

23/18 Someone who already has perverted views does not produce them again, since he already has perverted views. One who does not have perverted views does not produce perverted views either, because he has no perverted views. There are no perverted

views in the moment of perverted viewing either, because this involves both errors. You should now abandon your proud and arrogant mind and perceive things properly[322] for yourself. Who is there to have perverted views?

Further:

23v19 'Perverted views which are not-produced'.
How could this have any meaning?
When perverted views do not exist
How can there be a perverted viewer?

23/19 Because we have refuted perverted views on various grounds, you fall into non-production. Clinging to non-production you assert that 'non-production' is the true characteristic of perverted views. Therefore the verse says, how can you term perverted views non-produced'? Not even non-outflowing dharmas are regarded as having the characteristic of non-arising; how much less are the perverted views non-arising?[323] And since the perverted views do not exist, how can the perverted viewer exist? The perverted viewer only exists by virtue of perverted views.

Further:

23v20 If permanence, self, bliss and purity
In reality exist
Such permanence, self, bliss and purity
Will not be perverted views.[324]

23/20 If these four, permanence, self, bliss, and purity, have real and existent natures,[325] then permanence, self, bliss and purity are not perverted views, and why? Because they are fixed, existent, real things, so how could you call them perverted views?

If you say that these four - permanence, self, bliss and purity - do not exist, then impermanence, suffering, non-self and impurity[326] - these four will exist as realities, and will not be termed perverted views; since they are the opposites of perverted views they will be called non-perverted views. But this is not correct, and why?

23v21 If permanence, self, bliss and purity
In reality do not exist,
Impermanence, suffering and impurity
Should also not exist.

23/21 If these four - permanence, self, bliss, and purity - are in reality nonexistent, then because they do not exist the other four, impermanence etc., ought not to exist either, and why? Because there is no reciprocal dependence.

Further:

23v22 When perverted views cease in this way
Ignorance also ceases.
By the cessation of ignorance
Predispositions and so forth[327] cease.

23/22 'In this way' means by this kind of interpretation. When perverted views are extinguished, ignorance which is at the root of the twelve causes and conditions[328] is also extinguished. Through the extinction of ignorance the three kinds of predispositions and actions etc.[329] up to old age and death and so forth are all extinguished.

23v23 If the defilements have a real nature
And there is someone to whom they belong,

How can they be cut off
And who can cut off that nature?

23/23 If the defilements are perverted views, and have a real, existent nature, how can they be cut off?, and who can cut off that nature? If you say that the afflictions are false deceptions and have no nature, and can nevertheless be cut off, this is also wrong and why?

23v24 If the afflictions are false deceptions
With no nature, and belonging to no-one.
How can they be cut off?
For who can cut off a non-nature?

23/24 If all the afflictions are false deceptions with no nature, then there is no-one to whom they belong. How can they possibly be cut off? For who can cut off a dharma without a nature?

Chapter 24 Contemplation of the Four Truths[330] 40 verses

24/0 The questioner says: 'By destroying the four perverted views one penetrates the four truths and attains the four sramana - fruits.[331]

24v1 If everything is entirely empty
With no arising and no ceasing
Then there will be
No Dharma of the four holy truths.

24v2 And since there are no four truths,
Perception of suffering, cutting-off of the accumulation of Karma
Realising cessation and practising the Way;[332]
Such things will not exist.

24v3 Because these are nonexistent,
There will be no four fruits of the Way.[333]
And because there are no four fruits
There will also be none who attains, or aspires.[334]

24v4 If there are not the eight (types of) holy person[335]
Then there will be no Sangha-jewel.[336]
And because there are no four truths
There will be no Dharma-jewel either.

24v5 With no Dharma - or sangha-jewels
There will also be no Buddha-jewel.
Thus, one who teaches emptiness
Destroys the three jewels.

24/5 If everything in the world was entirely empty with nothing

existing, there would be no arising and no ceasing, and because of no arising and no ceasing there would be no four holy truths. Why is this? The truth of suffering arises from the truth of accumulation (of karma), the truth of accumulation being the cause, and the truth of suffering the effect. The truth of the cessation of suffering and accumulation is called the truth of cessation, and that which enables one to arrive at the truth of cessation is called the truth of the Way, the truth of the Way being the cause, and the truth of cessation the effect.

(32b27) Thus the four truths involve cause and effect. If there were no arising and no ceasing there would be no four truths, and if there were no four truths, there would be no perception of suffering, cutting-off of accumulation, realisation of cessation or cultivation of the Way, and without perception of suffering, cutting-off of accumulation, realisation of cessation and cultivation of the Way there would not be the four sramana-fruits.

(32c1) Without the four sramana-fruits there could not be the four types of aspirants and the four types of attainers, and if these eight categories of holy people did not exist there would be no jewel of the Sangha. Also, if the four holy truths did not exist there would be no jewel of the Dharma, and if the jewels of the Dharma and the jewel of the Sangha did not exist, how could there possibly be a Buddha? 'Buddha' means to have obtained the Dharma, so if there is no Dharma, how can there be a Buddha? Your (Nagarjuna's) teaching that all dharmas are entirely empty, consequently destroys the three jewels.

Moreover:

24v6 The doctrine of emptiness destroys cause and effect,
It also destroys sin and merit.
And further, you utterly destroy
All ordinary worldly dharma[337] (affairs).

24/6 If you accept the doctrine of emptiness, then you deny sin and merit, and the retributions and rewards of sin and merit. You also negate all conventional worldly dharmas. Since all these kinds of errors ensue, dharmas cannot be empty.

Reply:

24v7 You really cannot understand[338]
Emptiness, or the reasons for emptiness,
Or understand the meaning of emptiness.
Therefore you create difficulties for yourself.

24/7 You do not clearly understand what the characteristics of this 'emptiness' are, or for what reasons it is taught, and you do not understand the meaning of emptiness. Since you lack the capacity to know it for what it really is, you create these doubts and difficulties.

Moreover:

24v8 All Buddhas rely on two types of truth
In order to teach the Dharma of living beings.
One is conventional worldly truth,
The other is the truth of the ultimate meaning.[339]

24v9 If a person is unable to perceive
The distinction between these two truths
Then he will not know the real meaning
Of the profound Buddha-Dharma.

24/9 As for 'conventional worldly truth': all dharmas are empty in their nature, but because of our worldly perverted perceptions

we produce false and illusory dharmas, and this is worldly reality. Since the saints and sages know the true nature of these perverted perceptions, they know that all dharmas are utterly empty and that there is no arising, and this is the truth of the ultimate meaning which constitutes reality for the saints.

(32c23) All the Buddhas rely on these two truths in order to teach the dharma to living beings. A person who is unable to distinguish properly between these two truths does not know the real meaning of the extremely profound Buddha-Dharma. To say that 'dharmas are non-arising' is the truth of the ultimate meaning and that the other conventional truth is not necessary, is not correct, and why?

24v10 Unless you rely on the conventional truth
You will not attain the ultimate meaning.
Unless you attain the ultimate meaning
You will not attain nirvana.

24/10 The ultimate meaning is entirely dependent on words and expressions, and words and expressions are mundane and conventional. Therefore, without reliance on the conventional and the mundane, the ultimate meaning cannot be expounded. Unless one attains to the ultimate meaning, how can one attain nirvana? Therefore, although dharmas are non-arising, there are these two (levels of) truth.

Further:

24v11 If he is unable to perceive emptiness correctly,
A dull-witted man will injure himself.

It is like a spell unskilfully-invoked
Or a poisonous snake unskilfully-grasped.

24/11 If a man is dull-witted and does not clearly understand the doctrine of emptiness, there will be errors in (his understanding of) emptiness and he will produce wrong views. It is like cleverly catching hold of a poisonous snake: if you are unable to hold it skilfully it will turn on you, and you will be hurt. Or it is like a spell. If you want it to be performed but lack the capacity to accomplish it skilfully you will injure yourself instead. It is the same with a dull-witted man contemplating the doctrine of emptiness.

Further:

24v12 The World-Honoured One knew that this Dharma,
Extremely profound and subtle in character.
Could not be approached by the dull-witted.
This is why he was unwilling to teach.[340]

24/12 Because the dharma was extremely profound and subtle and would not be clearly understood by the dull-witted, the Buddha was reluctant to teach.

Further:

24v13 You say that we are attached to emptiness
And you produce and attribute errors to us.
But the errors which you are expounding
Do not exist in emptiness.

24/13 Because you say that we are attached to emptiness, you produce errors and attribute them to us. But the emptiness of natures of which we speak - this emptiness is itself empty.[341] There are no such errors.

Moreover:

24v14 By virtue of the principle of emptiness
All dharmas are established.
If there were no principle of emptiness
Nothing would be established.

24/14 By virtue of the principle of emptiness, all dharmas within the world and outside the world are established. If there were no principle of emptiness, then nothing at all would be established. Further:

24v15 You yourselves are in error
Yet you turn these errors against us.
Like a man riding a horse
Who forgets what he himself is mounted on.

24/15 You are wrong about the existence of dharmas but are not conscious of it yourselves, yet you can see faults in emptiness. It is like a man riding a horse who forgets that which he is riding on. Why is this:

24v16 If you perceive all dharmas
As having fixed, existent natures,
Then you will see all dharmas
As without causes and without conditions.

24/16 You teach that all dharmas have fixed natures. This being the case, you will see all dharmas as being without causes and without conditions, and why? If dharmas have fixed, existent natures, then they must be non-arising and non-ceasing, and what use would such dharmas have for causes and conditions? If you say that dharmas arise from causes and conditions, then

they will have no nature. Therefore, dharmas with fixed, existent natures have no causes and conditions. If you say that dharmas abide, fixed and settled in their own-nature, this is not correct, and why?

24v17 This constitutes a negation of cause and effect,
Of doing, doer and thing done.
And moreover it denies
The arising, and ceasing of all the myriad things.

24/17 If dharmas have fixed natures then there will be no such things as cause and effect etc. As the verse says:

24v18 Dharmas produced by causes and conditions
We say are nonexistent.[342]
And constitute conventional names[343]
And this is the meaning of the middle path.

24v19 There has never existed a single dharma
Which did not arise from causes and conditions.
Therefore no dharma exists
Which is not empty.[344]

24/19 Causes and conditions produce dharmas, and we say that they are empty. Why is this? It is entirely through the combination of causes that things are produced. Since these things depend upon causes and conditions they have no own-nature and since they have no own-nature, they are empty.

(33b17) Emptiness moreover is itself empty.[345] But in order to guide all beings, it is taught by means of conventional designations. Because it is separate from the extremes of both existence and

nonexistence, it is called the middle path. Since dharmas have no own-nature we cannot say that they exist, and since they are not vacuous[346] we cannot say that they are nonexistent. If dharmas possessed the characteristics of natures then they would exist independently of causes and conditions, but then if they did not depend on causes and conditions they would not be dharmas. Therefore, there are no non-empty dharmas. As for the errors which you discoursed on above[347] in regard to the doctrine of emptiness, these errors now rebound on you, and why?

24v20 If everything were not empty
There would be no arising or ceasing
And thus there would not be
The dharma of the four holy truths.

24/20 If every dharma each had its own individual existent nature and was not empty, then there would be no arising or ceasing, and because of no arising or ceasing there would be no dharma of the four holy truths. Why is this?

24v21 If suffering did not arise from conditions
Then how could there possibly be suffering?
The meaning of suffering is impermanence[348]
A fixed nature is not impermanent.

24/21 Suffering which does not arise from conditions is not suffering. Why is this? The sūtras say that the meaning of suffering is impermanence. If suffering had a fixed nature, how could it be impermanent, since it would not forsake its own-nature? Moreover:

24v22 If suffering had a fixed nature

How could it arise from accumulation?
Therefore there is no accumulation
Through denial of the principle of emptiness.

24/22 If suffering had a fixed nature, then it would not arise, being already existent. If this were so, there would be no truth of accumulation,[349] because of the denial of the principle of emptiness.

Further:

24v23 If suffering had a fixed nature
There would be no cessation[350]
Through your attachment to fixed natures
You deny the truth of cessation.

24/23 If suffering had a fixed nature, it would not cease. Why? Because natures do not cease.

Further:

24v24 If suffering had a fixed nature
There would be no cultivation of the Way.
If the Way can be cultivated
Then it does not have a fixed nature.[351]

24/24 If dharmas had a fixed existence, then there would be no cultivation of the Way, and why? If dharmas had reality, then they would be permanent, and what is permanent cannot be augmented. If the Way can be cultivated, then the Way does not have a fixed nature.

Further:

24v25 If there were no truth of suffering
And no truths of accumulation and cessation,
What could be achieved

By a Way to extinguish suffering?

24/25 If all dharmas had a pre-existent fixed nature, there would be no truths of suffering, accumulation or cessation. Then what state of extinction of suffering could the Way to the extinction of suffering achieve?

Further:

24v26 If suffering had a fixed nature
Which was not previously perceived
How could it be perceived now
Since its nature would not have changed?[352]

24/26 If previously, when you were unenlightened, you were unable to perceive the nature of suffering then you ought not to be able to perceive it now either, and why? Because its nature would be fixed as 'not perceived'.

Further:

24v27 Just as perception of suffering would not occur,[353]
So cutting-off accumulation, realising cessation,
Cultivation of the Way, and the four fruits[354]
Would also not occur

24/27 Just as, if the nature of the truth of suffering was not perceived previously it would not be perceived subsequently, so in the same way there would be no cutting-off of accumulation, realisation of cessation or cultivation of the Way, and why? If accumulation's nature was not cut-off before, it could not be cut off now either, because a nature cannot be cut off. If cessation was not realised previously, it could not be realised now either, because it was not realised before. If the Way was not previously cultivated, it could not be cultivated now, because it was not cultivated before.

Therefore none of the four holy truths or the four activities of perceiving, cutting-off, realising and cultivating would exist, and if these four activities did not exist, the four fruits of the Way would not exist either. Why is this?

24v28 The natures of these four fruits of the Way
Being formerly unattainable,
If all dharmas had fixed natures,
How could they possibly be attained?[355]

24/28 If all dharmas had fixed natures, and the four srāmana-fruits had not yet been attained, how could they be attained now? If they can be attained, their natures are not fixed.
Further:

24v29 If there were no four fruits
There would be none who attained or aspired
And without the eight kinds of holy person
There would be no jewel of the Sangha.

24/29 If the four srāmana-fruits did not exist, there would be none who attained the fruits and none who aspired to them. Without the eight types of saints and holy people there would be no jewel of the sangha. But the sutras say that these eight types of saints and holy people constitute the sangha-jewel.
Further:

24v30 Because there are no four holy truths
There is no jewel of the Dharma either
And without the Dharma-jewel and sangha-jewel
How can there be the Buddha-jewel?[356]

24/30 Putting into practise[357] the four holy truths one attains the

dharma of nirvana. If there were no four truths there would be no jewel of the Dharma. If these two jewels did not exist, how could the jewel of the Buddha possibly exist? By such reasonings as these, asserting that dharmas have fixed natures, you destroy the three jewels.

Question: Although you have refuted all dharmas, surely the ultimate state (Tao) of anuttara-samyak-sambodhi[358] exists, since it is by virtue of this state that we call someone 'Buddha'.

Reply:

24v31 You are saying that the Buddha exists
But independently of bodhi
And again, that independently of a Buddha
Bodhi nevertheless exists.

24/31 If, as you say, all dharmas have a fixed nature, then there should be Buddhahood independently of bodhi, and bodhi independently of Buddhahood, since the nature of these two will be permanent and fixed.

Further:

24v32 Although one diligently and singlemindedly sets forth
Cultivating and practising the bodhi-path
If he previously has the nature of a non-Buddha,
He cannot accomplish Buddhahood. ...

24/32 ... because he does not already have that nature. It is like iron which does not have the nature of gold. Even though you repeatedly refine it in various ways, it will never become gold.

Further:

24v33 If all dharmas were not empty
There would be no-one who did good or bad (deeds)[359]
If not empty, what could be done
Since their natures would be fixed?

24/33 If dharmas were not empty, there would never be people doing good and bad (deeds), and why? Because the natures of good and bad (deeds) would be already fixed, and also because there would be no doing or doer.

Further:

24v34 According to you, in sin and merit
There is no production of retribution and rewards
Such retribution and rewards exist,
But they are separate from sin and merit.

24/34 If, as you claim, there are no rewards and retributions inherent in the good and bad deeds which are their causes and conditions, then the rewards and retributions must exist separately from the good and bad actions which are their causes and conditions. Why is this? Because the rewards and retributions do not rely on causes to emerge.

Question: Good and evil rewards and retributions cannot exist apart from sin and merit. Good and evil rewards and retributions simply arise out of sin and merit.

Reply:

24v35 If you say that reward and retribution
Arise out of sin and merit;
If rewards arise from sin and merit
How can you say they are not empty?

24/35 If there are no good and evil rewards apart from sin and merit,

how can you say that rewards are not empty? If they are so then there will be no sin and merit apart from the doer. Your previous assertion that dharmas are not empty is not correct. Further:

24v36 Your denial of the idea of emptiness,
Of the causality of all dharmas[360]
Is a denial of all worldly conventions
And all other dharmas that exist.

24/36 If you deny the doctrine of causality, (and) the highest meaning of emptiness, then you deny all worldly dharmas, and why?

24v37 If you reject the idea of emptiness
Then there will be nothing which is done,
There will be doing without doing[361]
And a non-doer will be called a doer.

24/37 If you reject the idea of emptiness, then all (karmic) effects will be without a doer and without a cause. There would be doing without any doing, and there would be doers but nothing which was done. There would also be actions, rewards and retributions and reception without any doer.[362] But this is not correct, and therefore one should not deny emptiness. Further:

24v38 If they had fixed, existent natures
The various characteristics in the world
Would be non-arising and non-ceasing
Permanently abiding and imperishable.[363]

24/38 If dharmas had fixed natures, then all the various characteristics[364] in the world, (of) gods and men, animals,

and all things, would neither arise nor cease, and would abide eternally without perishing, and why? Because that which has a real nature cannot be altered. But we can manifestly see that all things have the characteristic of change, arising, ceasing, and undergoing transformations. Therefore, they cannot have fixed natures.

Further:

24v39 If there is not emptiness
One who has not yet attained will never attain
Nor will the defilements[365] be cut off,
Nor will there be termination of suffering.

24/39 If there were no dharma of emptiness, then those of merit and virtue, both in this world and in the worlds beyond, who had not yet attained (nirvāna) would all be unable to attain it, and there could be none who cut off the defilements, and no termination of suffering, and why? Because of fixed natures.

24v40 This is why it is said in the sutras
That if you perceive the dharma of causality
Then you can perceive the Buddha.[366]
And perceive suffering, accumulation, cessation and the Way.

24/40 If a person perceives that all dharmas arise from causes and conditions, such a person can perceive the Buddha's dharma-body[367] and augment his insight. He can perceive the four holy truths of suffering, accumulation, cessation and the Way, and perceiving the four holy truths he can attain the four fruits and extinguish all the afflictions. Therefore, you should not deny the principle of emptiness. If you deny the principle of emptiness then you deny the doctrine of causality, and if you

deny the doctrine of causality you deny the three jewels. And if you deny the three jewels, you deny yourself.

Chapter 25 Contemplation of Nirvana[368] 24 verses

25/0 Question:

25v1 If all dharmas are empty
With no arising and no ceasing
What is cut off, what extinguished
Which could be called nirvāna?

25/1 If all dharmas are empty, then there is neither arising nor ceasing. Since there is nothing which arises and ceases, what is it that is cut off, or what is it that is extinguished, that would be called nirvana? Therefore, dharmas cannot be empty. Because dharmas are not empty, cutting-off of the afflictions and extinction of the five skandhas is called nirvana.

Reply:

25v2 If dharmas were not empty
Then they would neither arise nor cease.
What would be cut off, what extinguished
Which could be called nirvana?[369]

25/2 If everything in the world were not empty, there would be neither arising nor ceasing. What would be cut off, and what extinguished, which could be called nirvana? Therefore neither existence nor nonexistence[370] is the gate that leads to nirvana. That which is called nirvana ...

25v3 ...Is neither attained nor arrived at[371]
Neither cut off nor permanent
Neither arisen nor ceased
This is what is called nirvana

25/3 'Not attained' means that there is nothing in terms of either action or reward, which is attained. 'Not arrived at' means that it is not a place which can be arrived at; 'not cut off'

means that since the five skandhas have been utterly empty from the beginning, when one attains the Way and enters nirvana without residue[372] there is nothing which is cut off. As for 'not permanent'; if there were dharmas that could be distinguished from each other these would be termed permanent, but since in the calm quiescence of nirvana there are no separately distinguishable dharmas, they are not termed permanent, and it is the same with arising and ceasing. Something which has characteristics such as these is called nirvana. Moreover, the sutras say that nirvana is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor both existent and non-existent, nor neither existent nor nonexistent.

Nirvana means non-reception of all dharmas[373] and inner peace and quiescence. Why is this?

25v4 Nirvana does not mean 'existent'
Existence has the characteristics of old age and death.[374]
No existent dharma ever exists
Without the characteristics of old age and death.

25/4 Since, as we see with our eyes, all the myriad things arise and cease, these have the characteristics of old age and death. If nirvana were an existence, then it would have the characteristics of old age and death, but this is not the case, and this is why nirvana is not termed 'existent'. Also, we do not see any distinct fixed dharmas, free from arising and ceasing and old age and death, which could be called nirvana. If nirvana is an existence then it ought to have the characteristics of arising and ceasing, old age and death, but it is because it is free of the characteristics of old age and death, that we

call it 'nirvana'.

Further:

25v5 If nirvana were existent
Then nirvana would be active
Not one dharma ever exists
Which is an inactive one.[375]

25/5 Nirvana is not an existence, and why? All the myriad things arise from conditions; they are all active. There is not a single dharma which may be termed an inactive one. Although permanent dharmas are conventionally designated 'inactive', if we investigate their reality, we find that even impermanent dharmas do not exist; how much less permanent dharmas which are neither visible nor conceivable?

Further:

25v6 If nirvana were existent
How could it be termed 'non-receiving'?
There is no dharma which is called existent
And yet has not arisen from reception.[376]

25/6 If, as you say, nirvana is an existent dharma, then the sutras ought not to state that nirvana is non-receiving, and why? There are no dharmas which are non-receiving and yet exist. Therefore, nirvana is not existent.

Question: If nirvana is not existent, then surely nirvana is nonexistent?

Reply:

25v7 Nirvana is not even an existence
How much less could it be nonexistence?

If nirvana does not exist as an existence,
Where could it exist as a nonexistence?

25/7 If nirvana is not an existence, how could nonexistence be nirvana? Why is this? Nonexistence exists because of existence. Where there is no existence, how can there be nonexistence? As the sutras tell us, nonexistent means something formerly existent that is now nonexistent. Nirvana is not like this, and why? Because it is not an existent dharma changing and becoming nonexistent. Therefore, nonexistence does not constitute nirvana either.

Moreover:

25v8 If nirvana is nonexistence
Why is it called non-receiving?
There has never yet been a dharma
Which is non-receiving and is termed nonexistent.

25/8 If you say that nirvana is nonexistence then the sutras ought not to teach that nirvana means non-receiving, and why? There is no nonexistent dharma which is termed non-receiving. Therefore we know that nirvana is not nonexistence.

Question: If nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent, what kind of thing is nirvana?

Reply:

25v9 Because we receive causes and conditions[377]
We revolve in samsara
Not receiving causes and conditions
Is what constitutes nirvana.

25/9 Because we do not know our perverted views for what they really are, we wander in samsara, on account of the five receptive

skandhas. When we recognise our perverted views for what they really are, then we no longer wander in samsara on account of the five receptive skandhas. When there is no longer any succession of the nature-less five skandhas, this is said to be nirvana.

Further:

25v10 As the Buddha tells us in the sutras;[378]
'Cut off from existence, cut off from nonexistence'.
Therefore we know that nirvana
Is neither existent nor nonexistent.

25/10 'Existence' means the three existences,[379] and 'nonexistence' means the cutting-off and cessation of the three existences. Because the Buddha teaches that both of these things should be cut off, we know that nirvana is neither existent nor non-existent.

Question: If nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent, is nirvana not a combination of existence and nonexistence?

Reply:

25v11 If, as you say, nirvana
Is a combination of existence and nonexistence
Then liberation will be existence and nonexistence
And this is not correct.

25/11 If you say that nirvana consists of a combination of existence and non existence, then these two elements of existence and nonexistence in combination will constitute liberation, but this is not correct, and why? Because the two elements, existence and nonexistence are opposite to each other. How can they exist in the same place?

Further:

25v12 If you say that nirvana consists in
A combination of existence and nonexistence
Nirvana will not be non-reception
These two arise from reception.

25/12 If, as you say, nirvana consists in a combination of existence and nonexistence, then the sutras ought not to teach that nirvana means 'non-receiving', and why? Because the two elements of existence and nonexistence arise from reception, and exist interdependently. Therefore, nirvana cannot be a combination of these two elements of existence and nonexistence.

Further:

25v13 If established by a combination of existence and nonexistence
How can you call it nirvana?
Nirvana means inactive
Existence and nonexistence are active.

25/13 A combination of the two elements of existence and nonexistence cannot be termed nirvana. Nirvana means 'inactive', whereas existence and nonexistence are active. Therefore nirvana is not both-existent-and-nonexistent.

Further:

25v14 How can existence and nonexistence
In combination, be nirvana
These two cannot exist in the same place
Just as light and darkness are never together.

25/14 The two elements of existence and nonexistence cannot be termed nirvana, and why? Existence and nonexistence are opposite to

each other and cannot exist in the same place, just as light and darkness are not found together. Therefore, where there is existence there is no nonexistence, and where there is nonexistence there is no existence. How could existence and nonexistence combined be termed nirvana?

Question: If nirvana is not a combination of existence and nonexistence, surely nirvana must be neither existence nor nonexistence?

Reply:

25v15 If nirvana is to be termed
Neither existence nor nonexistence
How can we distinguish
This 'neither existence nor nonexistence'?

25/15 If nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent, by what means would we distinguish this 'neither existent nor non existent'? Therefore, it is not the case that nirvana is neither existent nor nonexistent.

Further:

25v16 As for distinguishing neither existence nor nonexistence
And calling this nirvana;
If existence or nonexistence is established
Neither existence nor nonexistence is established.

25/16 If you distinguish 'neither existence nor nonexistence' as being nirvana, this is not correct, and why? If existence and nonexistence are established, then it naturally follows that neither existence nor nonexistence is established, but nonexistence means the opposite of existence, and existence means the opposite of nonexistence, and 'both existence and non-

existence' has already been refuted in the third proposition. Since there is no 'existence and nonexistence' how can there be 'neither existence nor nonexistence'? Therefore nirvana is not 'neither existence nor nonexistence'.

Further:

25v17 The Thus-Come,[380] after his decease
Is neither said to exist, nor not exist
Nor said to be both existent and nonexistent
Nor nonexistent and not nonexistent.

25v18 The Thus-Come in the present
Is neither said to exist, nor not exist
Nor said to be both existent and nonexistent
Nor nonexistent and not nonexistent.

25/18 Whether after the death of the Thus-Come, or while he is present, an existent Thus-Come does not receive, and a nonexistent Thus-Come does not receive either.[381] A both existent and nonexistent Thus-Come does not receive, nor does a neither-existent nor nonexistent Thus-Come receive. Since he does not receive, he does not discriminate nirvana as existent, nonexistent and so forth.

Apart from a Thus-Come, who could possibly attain nirvana?[382] In what time, in what place and by means of what dharma would we speak of nirvana? Therefore, though you may seek for the characteristics of nirvana everywhere and in all kinds of ways, you will not be able to find them.

Further:

25v19 Between nirvana and the world
There is not the slightest distinction
Between the world and nirvana
There is not the slightest distinction.[383]

25/19 On account of the succession of the five skandhas, and the causes and conditions of coming and going we refer to 'the world', but the nature of the five skandhas is utterly emptiness, non-reception and calm quiescence. This idea has already been expounded earlier.[384] Since all dharmas are non-arising and non-ceasing, there is no distinction between the world and nirvana, and there is no distinction between nirvana and the world.

Further:

25v20 The real limit of nirvana
And the limits of this world
Between these two limits
There is not the least distinction

25/20 If one exhaustively investigates the real limit of this world and nirvana and the limit of non-arising of this world and nirvana, you will not find the least difference between them because they are equal and inconceivable.

Further:

25v21 Whether there is existence or nonexistence after death, etc.,
The boundaries of existence, etc. and permanence etc.,
All such views depend on 'nirvana'
On 'future' and on 'past'.

25/21 That after the death of the Thus-Come the Thus-Come exists, or the Thus-Come does not exist, or the Thus-Come both exists and does not exist, or the Thus-Come neither exists nor does not

exist; that the world is bounded, the world is unbounded, the world is both bounded and unbounded, and the world is neither bounded nor unbounded; that the world is permanent, the world is impermanent, the world is both permanent and impermanent and that the world is neither permanent nor impermanent - these are twelve views of three kinds.

(36a20) The four views about whether or not the Thus-Come exists or does not exist etc. after his death arise as a consequence of (the concept of) nirvana.[385] The four views about whether the world is bounded or unbounded etc. arise as a consequence of (the concept of) the future.[386] The four views about whether the world is permanent or not permanent arise as a consequence of (the concept of) the past.[387]

The existence or nonexistence of the Thus-Come after death is inconceivable, and it is the same with nirvana. Just as in the case of the original and ultimate limits of the world;[388] it is inconceivable whether it is bounded or unbounded, permanent or impermanent, and the same goes for nirvana. This is why it is said that there is no difference in status[389] between nirvana and the world.

Further:

25v22 Since all dharmas are empty
What is bounded, and what unbounded,
Both bounded and not bounded,
Or neither bounded nor not bounded?

25v23 Why regard things as one or different?

What is permanent, impermanent,
Both permanent and impermanent,
Or neither permanent nor impermanent?

25v24 All dharmas are inconceivable.[390]
Extinguish all futile thoughts.[391]
There is no person, and no place
And there is nothing taught by the Buddha.

25/24 Since all dharmas at all times and of all kinds are produced from conditions, and since they are utterly empty, they have nc own-nature. Withing such dharmas, what is there to be bounded, and who is there to regard boundaries as existing? What could be unbounded, or both bounded and unbounded, or neither boundec nor unbounded? [Who is there to regard things as neither bounded nor unbounded?] What would be permanent, and who is there to regard things as permanent? What would be impermanent, both permanent and impermanent, or neither permanent nor impermanent and who is there to regard things as being neither permanent nc impermanent?

(36b9) What body is there to be the same as soul, and what body to be different from soul? It is the same with all of the sixty-two wrong views;[392] within utter emptiness they are all untentable. When every existence which is conceived is at rest, futile thoughts entirely cease, and when futile thoughts cease one penetrates into the true character of dharmas and attains the Way of calm serenity.[393]

(36b12) As already seen from the chapter on causality[394] if we discriminatingly investigate dharmas we find that they are neither existent, nor nonexistent, nor both existent and non-

existent, nor neither existent nor nonexistent. This is what is meant by 'the true character of all dharmas' and it is also termed thusness, dharma-nature, real-limit and nirvana.

This is why the Buddha, at no time and in no place, ever taught anyone any fixed characteristics of nirvana, and this is why we say[395] that when every existence which is conceived is at rest, all futile thoughts are extinguished.

Chapter 26 Contemplation of the Twelve Causes and Conditions[396]

9 verses

26/0 Question: You have expounded the Way of the ultimate meaning according to the Mahayana.[397] Now we want to hear you discuss how the Sravaka-dharma[398] enters into this Way of the ultimate meaning.[399]

Reply:

26v1 Living beings, obscured in delusion[400]
Subsequently give rise to the three actions[401]
And through producing these three actions
According to their predispositions they fall into the six destinies.[402]

26v2 Conditioned by the predispositions
Consciousness receives a body of the six ways
When consciousness becomes attached
Name and form develop.

26v3 Name and form developing
Cause the six avenues[403] to arise
When senses, objects and consciousness combine[404]
There arises six-fold contact.[405]

26v4 On account of the six contacts
The threefold reception[406] arises
On account of the threefold receiving
Craving is produced.

26v5 On account of craving there are the four graspings[407]
And because of grasping there is existence.

If the grasper would not grasp
There would be liberation, and no existence.

26v6 From existence there is birth
From birth comes old age and death
Because of old age and death there are
All the afflictions of sorrow and ill.

26v7 All such things as these
Arise from birth
Only through these causes and conditions
Does the great suffering of the skandhas[408] accumulate.

26v8 The basis of birth and death
And predispositions just described
Is created by the unenlightened man
The man of insight does not create it.

26v9 When these things cease
They do not arise
This suffering assemblage of the skandhas
Thus simply ceases.

26/9 Because the ordinary man is deluded by ignorance, he creates by his actions of body, speech and mind[409] his subsequent body, and gives rise to predispositions towards the six destinies. According to the predispositions which he has generated he becomes higher, the same (middle) or lower. His consciousness, entering into the six destinies according to its predispositions receives a body. With the attachment of consciousness as their basis name and form accumulate, and because of the accumulation

of name and form there are the six avenues. With the six avenues as their cause, the six contacts ensue, and on account of the six contacts there is threefold reception. With the three receptions as its cause craving arises, and because of craving there are the four graspings. When the four graspings grasp, sin and merit are generated by the actions of body, mind and speech, and these cause the subsequent succession of the three existences.[410]

(36c15) From existence comes birth, from birth come old age and death, and from old age and death come sorrow, grief, suffering and all the various evils, and there simply exists the great accumulation of suffering of the skandhas.

Hence we know it is that the ignorance of the ordinary man generates the foundation of the predispositions to birth and death here. They are not generated by one who has insight, who by seeing things as they really are, puts an end to ignorance.

(36c19) When ignorance ceases, all the predispositions also cease, and because the causes have ceased, the effects also cease. Thus by assiduously cultivating insight which views the arising and ceasing of the twelve causal conditions, these things cease, and because they cease, all of them including birth, old age and death, sorrow, grief, and the great suffering of the skandhas really and completely cease.

'Completely ceased' means utterly ceased. The meaning of the arising and ceasing of these twelve causal conditions is just as explained in detail in the Abhidharma-sutra.[412]

Chapter 27 Contemplation of Wrong Views[413] 30 verses

27/0 We have heard your refutation of wrong views in the Mahayana Dharma. Now we wish to hear you refute wrong views in the Sravaka-Dharma.[414]

27v1 Views of self existing or not existing
In the past,
And of the world being permanent, etc.
All depend on the past.[415]

27v2 Whether self will continue or not continue
In the future,
And views about boundedness, etc.,
All depend on the future.

27/2 Whether self existed in the past, or did not exist, or both existed and did not exist, or neither existed nor did not exist - these are termed 'views of permanence depending on the past'. Whether self will continue, or will not continue, or will both continue and not continue, or will neither continue nor not continue in the future - these are termed 'views of boundedness or non-boundedness which depend on the future'. On what grounds are such wrong views as these termed 'wrong views'? This we shall now explain.

27v3 'In the past, I existed'.
This is untenable.
The self which existed in the past
Does not constitute the present self.

27v4 If you say that the self is the same,
Only the body has different characteristics;
Apart from within a body
Where could another self be found?

27v5 No self exists apart from a body
This fact has already been established[416]
If you say that the body is the self,
If it is all, then there is no self.

27v6 The body alone does not constitute the self,
Since the body's characteristics arise and cease
How could receiving possibly
Constitute the receiver?[417]

27v7 Suppose the self existed apart from the body;
This would not be correct.
Without receiving, there would be a self,
But in reality this is never found.

27v8 Now the self is not separate from receiving
Nor is it the receiving
Neither non-receiving, nor non-existent;
This is its fixed meaning.

27/8 If you say that the self existed in the past, this is not correct, and why? The self of an earlier period does not constitute the present self, since this would involve the error of permanence. If one admits permanence, then the errors will be countless, and why? Take the case of a man who, on account of his good deeds, becomes a god and then afterwards becomes a man again.[418] If the former self were the same as

the self of the present time, then the god would be a man. Or again, it is like a man who, because of evil deeds becomes a caṇḍāla[419] and subsequently becomes a brāhman. If the former self were the same as the present self, the caṇḍāla would be the brāhman.[420]

(37a25) It is like, for example, a brāhman from Srāvastī[421] called Devadatta,[422] travelling to the City of the King's Residence (Rājagṛha).[423] He remains known as Davadatta - he has not been changed by arriving at the City of the King's Residence. If someone who had previously been a god subsequently became a man, then the god would be the same as the man, and a caṇḍāla would be the same as a brāhman, but this is not so, and why? A god is not the same thing as a man, and a caṇḍāla is not the same thing as a brāhman, because this would involve the error of permanence.

(37b1) You may say that the former self is not the present self, in the same way that a man is called a washerman when he is washing clothes, but a reaper when he is reaping. Although there is no difference between the washerman and the reaper, nevertheless the washerman is not the same thing as the reaper, and in the same way, you may say, the self receiving the body of a god is called a god, and the self receiving the body of a man is called a man. The self is not different, only the bodies are different. This however is not correct, and why? Because if it (the individual) is the same, then we ought not to say that the god becomes a man.

(37b6) Is there no difference between the washerman and the reaper,

or is there a difference? If there is no difference, then the washerman should be identical with the reaper, and in the same way the former god should be identical with the man, and the candala the same as the brāhmam, and here again there would be the error of permanence. If there is a difference, then the washerman would not be the same as the reaper, and the god would not be the man, and the self would not be permanent. Being impermanent, it would not have the characteristic of 'self' and therefore it could not be said to be the same.

(37b10) Question: Self is the same; it is merely that we make distinctions, because of reception, between 'being a god', and being a man', 'being a candala', and being a brahman', but the sel in reality is neither god nor man, neither candala nor brāhman Therefore, there are no such errors.

...ception' means the ...ly of the five ...ndhas. Through ...r karmic ...ditioning we ...nguish between ...ing a god', 'being ...an'

Reply:

(37b14) This is not correct, and why? If the body makes one a god or a man, a candala or a brāhman; if it is not the self, then the must be another distinct self which exists apart from the body Now, sin and merit, birth and death, going and coming, are all of the body and not of the self. Because of our sins we fall into the three evil paths.[424] Because of our meritorious actions we are reborn in the three good paths. If pain and pleasure, anger and bliss, grief, fear, etc. are entirely of the body and not of the self, what use do they hav for a self? It would be like a layman being sentenced for his cr but as a monk he is exempt.[426] Wit the causes and conditions of the five skandhas continuing to succeed each other and sin and merit not disappearing, there would nevertheless be liberation. If all this were of the bod

and not the self, what need would there be for a self?

(37b21) Question: Sin and merit, etc. are based and rely upon the self, because the self is that which knows, but in the body there is nothing which knows. Surely the knower is the self. It initiates the causes and conditions of action, and sins and merits are the things done. We must recognise that there is a doer, and that doer is the self. The body is what the self employs, and is the place in which the self resides. As an analogy, the master of a house constructs his house using straw, wood, mud and plaster. Because it is for his own body,[427] he builds a good or bad house according to what he uses. It is the same with the self, for one acquires an attractive or ugly body according to whether one performs good or bad deeds. The six paths of samsara are all created by the self, and this is why the body of sin and merit entirely depends upon the self. By way of analogy, it is like a house, which belongs only to the master of the house and not to any other person.

Reply:

(37b29) This analogy does not work, and why? The master of the house can build the house because he has shape, is tangible and has strength. Since the self which you are describing has no form and is intangible, it has no creative power,[428] and having no creative power of its own it cannot cause anything else to act. If there were one single dharma in the world which, though without shape, and intangible, nevertheless had the capacity to do things, then we could accept and believe this and know that there is a doer, but this is not the case.

(37c4) If the self were the doer then there would be no self-created

suffering, for if such a thinker[429] could be attached to pleasurable things then he would never forsake them. If the self does not create suffering and yet suffering inexorably arises, then all other things are also produced automatically, and not created by the self.

(37c7) If the one who sees is the self, then since the eye can see forms, the eye should be the self. If the eye sees and yet is not the self, this contradicts what you said before about the seer being the self.[430] If the seer is the self, then the self ought not to be able to hear or smell objects, such as sounds, etc., and why? Because the eye is that which sees; it cannot hear or smell objects, such as sounds. Therefore, to say that that which sees is the self, is not correct.

(37c11) If you say 'it is like a reaper using a sickle to cut grass; in the same way the self is able to do things using the hands, etc this is not correct, and why? Because the reaper exists quite separately from the sickle, but there is no separate doer apart from the various faculties of body and mind.

(37c14) If you say 'although the doer is not the faculties of eye and ear, etc., the doer does exist', then things could be done by a barren woman's child, for if this were so all the faculties would be entirely without a self.[431] If you say 'the left eye sees things but the right eye cognizes them, and we must accept that there is a separate seer' this is not correct, for the right hand performs actions which the left hand is unable to perform, and therefore there is no separate doer. If a separate doer existed, the left hand could also perform actions

carried out by the right hand, but in reality it cannot, and therefore no doer exists.

(37c20) Again, if those who hold that a self exists say that when we see another person eating, saliva is produced in our mouth and this is a mark of self, this is not correct, and why? Because this is power of a thought, not power of a self. Moreover, this denies the causes and conditions of self. A man who is in company may be ashamed to salivate, yet the saliva inexorably comes forth and he cannot control it, so we know that there is no self.

(37c24) Again, there is the evil error of the perverted view[432] that when one who has been a father in a previous life becomes a so in the present life, the self of the father and son is one, on the bodies are different. It is like moving from one house to another house; since he is a father, a father does not become any different by entering a different house. If there were a self, then these two (father and son) would be one, and thus a great error would be involved.

(37c28) If you say that this error also applies in the case of the continuity of the five skandhas which are without a self, this is not correct, and why? Even though the five skandhas are continuous, they sometimes function, and sometimes do not function. It is like grape juice,[433] which one who holds to th precepts is allowed to drink. He should not drink grape wine, but if it turns and becomes vinegar then he may again drink it. It is the same with the continuity of the five skandhas; they function, and then do not function.[434]

(38a3) If you say that there is only one self from beginning to end this is wrong, for within the continuity of the five skandhas there is no such error, it is merely that through the combination of the five skandhas there is a temporary designation of 'self', which however has no fixedness. It is like beams and rafters combining to form a house, where there is no separate house apart from the beams and rafters. In the same way the self exists through the combining of the five skandhas. Since there is in fact no self apart from the five skandhas, 'self' is merely a temporary designation with no fixed reality.

(38a8) You earlier said[435] that there is a separate receiver apart from reception, and that we can distinguish the receiver, according to his receiving, as a god or as a man, etc., but this is all wrong. You should know that only receiving exists, with no separate receiver. If you say 'a self exists, distinct from receiving' this is incorrect. If there were a self apart from receiving, how could we speak of the characteristics of such a self? Since its characteristics could not be described, there is no self apart from receiving.

(38a12) If you say that there is no self apart from the body, and that the self is simply the body, this is not correct either, and why? Because the body has the characteristics of arising and ceasing, and this is not the case with the self.

Moreover, how can you call something a receiver by virtue of receiving? If you say that there is a receiver who exists distinct from receiving, this is also incorrect. If the five skandhas were non-receptive and yet a receiver existed, this

would have to be a separate receiver apart from the five skandhas, and the functions of eye, etc., ought to reach it,[436] but in fact they do not reach it. Therefore self is not separate from reception, nor is it the same as reception, nor is it non-reception, nor again is it nonexistent. These are definite principles,[437] so you must recognise them.

To say that self existed in the past is not correct, and why?

27v9 That self did not operate[438] in the past;
This is incorrect.
That the self in the past was different
From present self, is also incorrect.

27v10 If you say that they are different
The one now should exist separately from the other one.
Self abiding in the past,
And the present self being self-produced.

27v11 This would be severance, cessation,
Loss of action and reward.
That one acting, this one receiving
And other such errors as these.

27v12 Previously nonexistent, now existent;
There are errors in this as well.
Self would create dharmas
And this would be causelessness.

27/12 'The self in the past does not constitute the present self' is not correct, and why? The past self is not different from the

present self. If the present self were different from the past self, then the present self ought to exist quite separately from that other self. Also, the past self, would abide in that (body), and this body would have to produce itself anew, and if so, this would fall into the extreme of severance, losing all karmic action and reward.

Also that person would sin, while this person would receive the retribution, and there would be countless other such errors Also this self, having been inexistent previously, would now be existent, and this would also be an error. Self would create dharmas, and this would be causelessness. Therefore it is not correct to say that the past self does not constitute the present self.

Further:

27v13 Just like the views of self
As existent, or nonexistent in the past;
Whether it is both, or neither
These are all incorrect.

27/13 Just as in seeking for self in the past, there are the wrong views that it existed or did not exist, so too the views that it both exists and does not exist, or neither does nor does not exist are also wrong views. These are all wrong, for the same reasons as the errors previously discussed.

27v14 Whether the self will operate
Or not operate, in the future;
Such views as these
Are the same as those of the past.

24/14 The four propositions about whether the self will or will not operate in the future are like the errors relating to the past, and should be discussed along with them.

Further:

27v15 If the god were the same as the man
This would fall into the extreme of permanence
The god would be non-arising
Because permanent dharmas do not arise.

27/15 If you hold that the god is the same as the man, this is permanence, for unless the god is reborn as a man, how can you call him a man? Since permanent dharmas do not arise, permanence is not correct either.

Further:

27v16 If the god is different from the man
This is impermanence
If the god differs from the man
There is no continuity between them.

27/16 If the god is different from the man, then this constitutes impermanence, and impermanence implies the errors of severance and cessation, etc. It is like the errors previously discussed; if the god and the man are different, then there is no continuity between them, whereas if there is continuity then they cannot be said to be different.

Further:

27v17 If half-god and half-man,
Then you fall into both extremes
Of permanence and impermanence,
And this is not correct.

27/17 Suppose that half of the body of the living being were divine, and half of the body were human. If this were so, then it would be both permanent and impermanent, the god-half being permanent and the human half impermanent, but this would not be right, and why? Because of the error of one body having two characteristics.

Further:

27v18 If both permanence and impermanence
Are established together,
In this case 'neither permanence
Nor impermanence' should be established.

27/18 If both permanence and impermanence can be established together it naturally follows that 'neither permanence nor impermanence' can be established, but since permanence and impermanence are opposites, permanence and impermanence are never in fact established together, and therefore 'neither permanence nor impermanence' is not established either.

Moreover, it is also incorrect to say that birth and death (samsāra) has no beginning, and why?

27v19 If dharmas had a fixed 'coming'
And a fixed 'going'
Birth and death would have no beginning
But in reality there are no such things.[439]

27/19 If dharmas were fixed and there were places from which they came and to which they went, then birth and death would have no beginning, but if we investigate these dharmas with prajnā-insight[440] we cannot find anywhere whence they came, or anywhere

whither they go. It is therefore not correct to say that birth and death have no beginning.

Moreover:

27v20 Now, if there is no permanence
How can there be impermanence
Or both permanence and impermanence
Or neither permanence nor impermanence?

27/20 If it is the case that, if we investigate with prajnā-insight, we find no dharma that can possibly be permanent, then what could be impermanent, since impermanence exists only by virtue of permanence? If neither of these two exists, how can there be 'both permanence and impermanence', and if 'both permanence and impermanence' does not exist how can 'neither permanence nor impermanence' exist? It is because of 'both permanence and impermanence' existing that 'neither permanence nor impermane exists.

Therefore, the four propositions regarding permanence, etc. which are based and rely upon the past are untenable. Also untenable are the four propositions based and relying on the future regarding whether the world is bounded or not bounded, etc., which we shall now discuss. Why is this?

27v21 If the world is bounded
How can there be a subsequent world?
If the world is unbounded
How can there be a subsequent world?[441]

27/21 If the world had boundaries, there could not be any subsequent world, but in reality there are subsequent worlds, and therefore it is not correct to say that the world has boundaries.

If the world had no boundaries there would be no subsequent world either, but in fact there are subsequent worlds and it is therefore incorrect to say that the world does not have boundaries. Moreover, both of these extremes is untenable, and why?

27v22 The constant succession of the five skandhas
Is like the flame of a lamp
Because of this the world
Can be neither bounded nor unbounded.

27/22 Out of the five skandhas again arise the five skandhas. The five skandhas succeed each other in sequence, like the flame of a lamp which exists through the combination of its conditions. If the conditions are not exhausted, the lamp does not go out, but if they are exhausted it goes out. Therefore, it cannot be said that the world either has or does not have boundaries. Moreover:

27v23 If, the previous skandhas having perished,
Independently of these five skandhas
The subsequent skandhas were to arise,
The world would have boundaries.

27v24 If, the previous skandhas not having perished,
Also independently of these five skandhas
The subsequent five skandhas were to arise
The world would be boundless.

27/24 If, after the previous five skandhas have perished, the subsequent five skandhas arise, independently of the earlier five skandhas, then the world has boundaries. Where no further

five skandhas are produced after the previous five skandhas have ceased, this is called a boundary. 'Boundary' means the final body.[442]

(39a11) If, the previous five skandhas not yet having perished, the subsequent five skandhas arose independently of these five skandhas, then the world would have no boundaries, and this would be permanence. But in reality this is not so, and therefore to hold that the world does not have boundaries is not correct. Worlds are of two kinds; the worlds of countries and the worlds of living beings. This refers to a world of living beings. Moreover, as is said in the 'Four Hundred Contemplations'[443]

(39a16) "Since the true Dharma, the teacher
And the hearer are difficult to obtain
Thus birth and death
Are neither bounded nor unbounded".[444]

Because we have not attained the true Dharma our birth and death and going and coming are unbounded. Since we may at some time manage to hear the true Dharma and attain the Way, we cannot say that the world is unbounded. We shall now refute 'both bounded and unbounded'.

27v25 'If the world were half bounded
And half unbounded
Then it would be both bounded
And unbounded': Not so.

27/25 If the world were half bounded and half unbounded then it would be 'both bounded and unbounded', but if this were so, then one dharma would have two characteristics, and this is not correct.

Why is this?

27v26 How could one part of that recipient
Of the five skandhas be destroyed
While one part is undestroyed
This is not correct.

27v27 Receiving is also like this;
How can one part be destroyed
And one part not destroyed?
This is not correct.

27/27 How could one part of the 'recipient of the five skandhas' be destroyed and the other part not destroyed? One entity cannot be both permanent and impermanent. It is the same with reception; how could one part be destroyed whilst the other part was not destroyed, since this would involve the error of the dual characteristics of permanence and impermanence? Therefore it is not the case that the world is both bounded and unbounded.

We shall now refute the view that the world is neither bounded nor unbounded:

27/28 If both bounded and unbounded
Can be established together
Then 'neither bounded nor unbounded'
Would also be established.

27/28 'Unbounded' exists by virtue of being the opposite of 'bounded', in the same way that short exists as the opposite of long. The opposite of being or not being is 'both being and not being' and

the opposite of 'both being and not being' is 'neither being nor not being'. If 'both bounded and unbounded' were definitely established then there would be 'neither bounded nor unbounded', and why? Because they depend upon each other.

In what has gone before we have already refuted the third proposition 'both bounded and unbounded', so how can there possibly be 'neither bounded nor unbounded', since there is no interdependence?

Upon investigation, the four views of the world having boundaries, etc., which rely upon the future are found to be entirely untenable.

Further:

27v29 Since all dharmas are empty
Views about the permanence, etc. of the world -
In what place, and at what time,
And by whom, would such views be generated?[445]

27/29 In the above, he (Nagarjuna) has refuted all views in the Sravaka-Dharma, and now he states that in the Great Vehicle Dharma all dharmas have had from the beginning the nature of utter emptiness. Within this empty nature of dharmas there are no persons and no Dharma, so there can be no production of wrong views or right views.[446] 'Place' means location. 'Time' means a particular day, month or year. 'Whom' means a person. 'Such' means the substance of all views.

(39b18) If there are fixed views of permanence, impermanence etc., there must be a person who generates these views. When self is

destroyed there is no production of such views by a person. There must be a place for manifestly observed dharmas to be negated; how much more a time? If all these views exist they should have a fixed reality, but if they were fixed they could not be destroyed, and we have already negated them on various grounds in what has gone before; therefore you should know that views have no fixed substance; how can they arise? As the verse says: 'In what place, and at what time, and by whom would such views be generated?'

27v30 To Gautama,[447] Great Sage and Master,
Who from pity and compassion preached this Dharma,
Entirely cutting off all views;
We now bow our heads in reverence.

27/30 'All views' means, if the teaching is summarised, five views, or if detailed, sixty-two views.[448] It was in order to cut off all these views that He preached the Dharma. The Great Sage and Master Gautama, has immeasurable, unbounded and inconceivable wisdom and insight, and this is why we bow our heads to him in reverence.